

Ibn Sab'in of the Ricote Valley; The First and Last Islamic Place in Spain.



Govert Westerveld
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Father Dimas Ortega, Chronicler of the Ricote Village of the Ricote Valley (Murcia) Spain.

Preface

This book is the outcome of a close study of the Ricote Valley and its famous Sufi Ibn Sab'in. Its purpose is to disclose more of the historical and comparative data. Arab Spaniards have created a glorious human story that lasted for centuries within the scope of the Mediterranean culture. However, a lot of the history of the Ricote Valley is only written in Spanish and still not in English.

The history of Arab-Islamic civilization, during the period c. 711-1613 cannot be written without paying attention to the contributions of the Andalusians in all aspects of civilization. Many Andalusian names excelled in Islamic philosophy, such as Ibn-Bajah, Ibn-Tufayl, Ibn-Rusd (known in Latin as Averroes), etc.; in the history of Arab science, such as Ibn-Zuhr (Avenzoar), Ibn-Al-Baytar, Musa Ibn-Maymun, etc.; The Andalusian Age had also enhanced the history of Arab-Islamic Sufism by virtue of Sufis who lived in, or came from, Andalusia, like Ibn-Qasiyy, Ibn-'Arabi, and Ibn-Sab'in.

Andalusian scientists moved from the region of Murcia to the heart of the Islamic world. Their move had quite a deep effect. Among these scientists was the great Sufi philosopher, Muhammad Ibn-'Abdul-Haq known as Ibn- Sab'in (d. 669 H. = 1270 AD), who came from the Ricote Valley. He is the originator of the deep philosophical approach in dealing with highly humanistic Sufi thought, and the author of the magnificent treatise *Al-Kalam 'ala Al-Masa'il Al-Siqqilliyya*, in which he answered the philosophical questions that Frederick II, the Emperor of Sicily, sent to Muslim scientists in the Mashreq and the Maghreb.

Following the same path, Abul-'Abbas Al-Mursiy (named after the Andalusian city of Murcia), one of the founders of the Shadhuliya Order, moved from Andalusia to Egypt. Years later his order became one of the most prevalent Sufi orders in Egypt and the Islamic world.

The same happened with the mystic Ibn Hud, another Al-Andalusian who emigrated from Murcia to the Orient (d. 1300). He was a disciple of Ibn Sab'in, a follower of the doctrine of the "unity of existence" (wahdat Al-wuyud), and interested in medicine and philosophy.

To write the history of the Arabic period of Spain well one must be an Arabist and unfortunately this is not the case of the writer. Therefore, this little book is only a short introduction to the history of the Ricote Valley and of the Sufis coming from the Region of Murcia. However, it is an ideal book for those who want to write a doctoral thesis about Ibn Sab'in or the Sufis, because the book is full of rarely seen details and it has complete references.

Researching the different papers about Ibn Sab'in one comes to the conclusion that to refer well to the documents in question is not an easy feat. On many occasions the researchers, even reputable Arabists, do not indicate the volume and page numbers of the books in question. At times they do not clearly mention the whole names or years of the books.

In this book the references are not abbreviated after the first full reference of the author. In this way one is not obliged to go to the end of the book to find the whole reference. Surely this is not very academic, but we are in an era where "time is money", and this is done to help young researchers save time.

There are other historians who are notoriously known for their enigmatic and frequently absent footnotes and bibliographical references. The author has tried here to give the most complete information and sources. However, it was not possible to quote all of them summarizing their main hypotheses.

Finally, here's a note on the title of the book in which we have placed the phrase "the First and Last Islamic Place in Spain". It is known that the Ricote Valley was the last place in Spain. King Philip III and his corrupt prime minister the Duke of Lerma were the principal actors in the final *expulsion* of 1609-1614. On the other hand, the most recent relevant archaeological findings were obtained by the researcher Arnald Puy Maeso who wrote a doctoral thesis about the construction of the first Andalusian terraces of

Ricote¹. He based his writings on an earlier doctoral thesis of José María García Avilés². The traditional irrigated terraces in the garden (huerta) of Ricote provided organic matter with a median probability age of 706 A.D. (647-778 A.D.), according to the corresponding analysis methods. These figures could imply that the construction of the first terraces at Ricote was formed at a very early date³. Moreover, it is possible that the first Arabic Berber tribes entered some years before the known date of 711 A.D. or shortly thereafter. The Ricote village was the first settlement of the six villages of the Ricote Valley.

The author of this book expresses his special gratitude and thanks to Jesús Joaquín López Moreno and Joaquín Salmerón Juan who helped him with additional information and photos.

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¹ **PUY MAESO, Arnald** (2012) Criterios de construcción de las huertas andalusíes. El caso de Ricote (Murcia, España). Tesis doctoral en la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

² **GARCÍA AVILÉS, José María** (1999) Una sociedad agraria en tierras de la Orden de Santiago: El Valle de Ricote (1740-1780) Tesis doctoral (Cum Laude) en la Universidad de Murcia.

GARCÍA AVILÉS, José María (2000) El Valle de Ricote: fundamentos económicos de la Encomienda Santiaguista, 1740-1780. Murcia: Real Academia Alfonso X el Sabio.


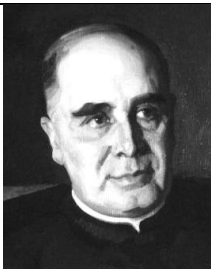







³ **PUY MAESO, Arnald & BALBO, A.L.** (2013) The Genesis of Irrigated Terraces in Al-Andalus. A Geoarchaeological Perspective on Intensive Agriculture in Semi-arid Environments (Ricote, Murcia, Spain). In: Journal of Arid Environments, Vol. 89, pp. 45-56.










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The granary of Al-Darrax

		
Amari, Michele Benedetto Gaetano (1806-1889) Italy	Asín Palacios, Miguel (1871-1944) Spain	Badawi, Abdel Rahman (1917-2002) Egypt
		
Bosch Vilá Jacinto (1922-1985) Spain	Codera y Zaidín, Francisco (1836-1917) Spain	Corbin, Henry (1903-1978) France
		
Fernández y González, Francisco (1833-1917) Spain	García Anton, José (1916-2010) Spain	García Gómez Emilio (1905-1995) Spain

		
Gaspar Remiro, Mariano (1868-1925) Spain	Gayangos, Pascual de (1809-1897) Spain	González Palencia, Ángel (1889-1949) Spain
		
Keller, Carl A. (1920-2008) Switzerland	Massignon, Louis (1883-1962) France	Mehren, August Ferdinand Michael (1822-1907) Switzerland
		
Ribera y Tarrago, Julián (1858-1934) Spain	Simonet, Francisco Javier (1829-1897) Spain	Steiger, Arnald (1896-1963) Switzerland



Ibn Sab'in

1. SUFISM IN ANDALUSIA

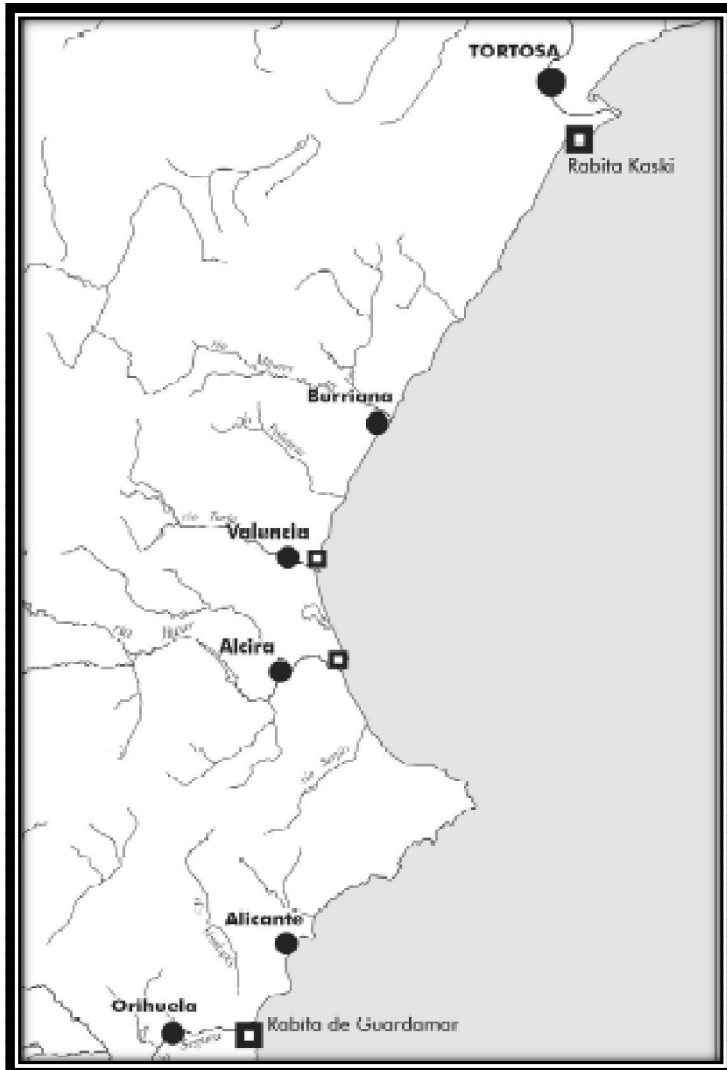
The Ribat

The Ribat⁴ is an institution linked to war and religious life that produced different material structures. Most are still unrecognized and therefore have not been fully studied. Ribat was originally used as a term to describe a frontier post where travelers (particularly soldiers) could stay.

The term transformed over time to become known as a center for Sufi fraternities. The ribats were converted to peaceful use where Sufis could congregate. Usually the ribats were inhabited by a Shaykha and his family and visitors were allowed to come and learn from him. These institutions were used as a sort of school house where a Shaykha could teach his disciples the ways of the specific Sufi brotherhood or fraternity. They were also used as a place of worship where the Shaykha could observe the members of the specific Sufi order and help them on their Tariqa, or their inner path to Haqiqah, or ultimate truth "reality". Another use of ribat refers to a sort of Sufi convent for women, or a retreat house. Female shaykhas, scholars of law in medieval times, and large numbers of widows or divorcees lived in abstinence and worship in Sufi ribats. Some of these women stayed in the ribats until they were able to remarry in an effort to maintain their reputation because divorced women were not widely accepted in Islamic society⁵.

⁴ **TORRES BALBAS, L.** (1948) Rabitas hispano-musulmanas. In: Al-Andalus, Madrid, XIII/2, pp. 475-491.

⁵ **SCHIMMEL, Annemarie** (1975) Mystical Dimensions of Islam. University of North Carolina Press. pp. 231-232.



Ribats

HILLENBRAND, Robert (1994) *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 331.
HOFFMAN, Valerie (1995) *Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. p. 232.

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There are a number of names that allude to such buildings located in the Peninsula: La Rápita, in Barcelona; Rebato also in the province of Barcelona; Rápita in Lleida; San Carles de la Rápita in Tarragona; La Masía de la Rábita in Albarracín; Casa de la Rápita in Valencia; Morra de Roabit in Alicante; Revate in Orihuela; Rábita in Jaén; La Rábita in Alcalá la Real; La Rábita in Alcaudete; La Rábita in Granada; Rábita de Xarfa, Puntal de la Rábita and the Rábita de Albuñol in Granada; Rubite in Granada and Robite in Málaga; Rábita in Antequera; Rábita in Vélez-Málaga; The Rábida in Huelva; the alquería de Rábida in Salamanca and the Rábida in the Balearic Islands; Arrábida in Beja and Arrábida in Lisboa and Oporto⁶ in Portugal. Todmir had a caliphal rabbit near the town of Guadarmar del Segura. This caliphal rabbit is situated on the dunes on the right bank of the river Segura, near the town of Guadarmar. This kind of fortified Muslim religious institution dates back to the year 944.

The Caliphal Rabbit of the Dunes of Guardamar del Segura is the only Islamic monastic complex of the Andalusian Umayyad period (X-XI century) preserved almost in its entirety. This fact was possible because after being abandoned, in the middle of the eleventh century, as a result of the civil war suffered by the Caliphate, the whole rabbit was buried and saved from attacks. So it took almost nine centuries, hidden under the sand, until in 1897, during the reforestation work, people found a headstone inscription in Arabic. The engineer Francisco Botella who was responsible for carrying repopulation of the pine forest ordered to translate it. The text was as follows:

⁶ **RUIZ MARTÍNEZ, Pascual** (2010) El caso de los eremitorios fortificados musulmanes: el Ribat en la Edad Media Peninsular. In Contraclave. Revista digital educativa, www.contraclave.es.

"In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, there is no God, but Allah: Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, this mosque was finished in the month of Almoharren in the year 333 A.H. (944 AD).... The building of it was ordered by Ahmed, the son of Bohul, the son of the daughter of Alwatsecbilá, he who seeks reward from Allah. He did so with the help (under the direction at the cost) of Mohammed, the son of Abusalema,work of Aben Borracha, the builder."



The first sufi institution in Rabit in Guadarmar del Segura
Photo: <http://www.guardamarturisme.com>

It is reasonable to assume that in the Ricote Valley there was a Sufi movement in the XIII century linked to a holy war, seeing the fact that Ibn Hud precisely raised in this place. It is furthermore quite possible that after the year

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944 there arose an extensive network of ribats from the coast to the interior towns and villages⁷:

Established in 944 according to the Arabic inscription on its foundation stone the ribat at Guardamar comprised a communal mosque, a large reception area, lodging rooms for pilgrims, and thirteen cells for the resident hermits. In a pointer to the religious exercises that were practiced there each of the cells contained its own prayer niche while Arabic have been preserved from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries in which pilgrims ask for prayers to be said on their behalf. There is considerable debate over the extent to which such ribats spread across Islamic Spain and the regions of North and Saharan Africa to which Spain was connected. However, Arabic sources from Muslim Spain do point to the existence of an extensive network by the eleventh century ranging from Denia and Almeria on the eastern coast to Toledo and Badajoz inland and to Silves on the western fringes of the Iberian peninsula.

Probably the Muslims, centuries before the military orders appeared, had the institution of the ribat as hermitage. In this institution the holy men who alternated between asceticism and the defense of the borders lived in retirement. Consequently, at certain times ribat was also connected with a *holy war*.

In this respect we cannot forget the sufi Ibn Qasi, a political leader of the opposition against the Almoravid dynasty in Al-Garb Al-Andalus and governor of the Taifa of Mértola. He was born in Silves and a friend of Ibn Al-Arif. According to the historian Ibn Al-Katib he had met in Alicante the sufi Ibn al'Arif whose teaching he followed. Furthermore he wished to rule and called himself mahdi, guided by God. However, after the death of his friend Ibn Al-Arif there was an insurrection of Ibn

⁷ **GREEN, Nile** (2012) *Sufism: A Global History*. Oxford, p. 57.

Qasi in Portugal. He constructed a ribat on the coast of Silves and proclaimed himself a politico-religious leader with the faculty of performing miracles. The Ribat of Arrifana near Aljezur is a unique Islamic hermitage in Portugal which was followed in 1130 by warrior monks to spread Jihad (holy war). His success was great because for almost ten years he ruled with sovereignty in Portugal⁸. The conquest of Mértola was a real achievement⁹:

In 1143 or 1144 Ibn Qasi ordered one of his followers to take for him the castle of Monte Agudo, but though this was done, it was soon recaptured and his lieutenant executed. Ibn Qasi thereupon turned his attention to the fortress of Mértola, one of the strongest in the west. His men, in a band numbering only seventy, entered it by a trick and Ibn Qasi made it his headquarters, freely distributing the money which he declared he had received from God, but which nevertheless bore the emblems of the Almoravids. Silves was soon stirred up by his friend Muhammad Ibn 'Umar Ibn Al-Mundir; and Évora under Sidray Ibn Wazir declared for him. Ibn Al-Mundir, with troops from Évora, drove the Almoravids out of Beja, and by September 1144 ilb Qasi had created for himself an independent state comprising a large part of Portugal below the Tagus.

The Ribat of Arrifana is a religious-defensive settlement located on a rise on the Atlantic Ocean. The exact place is in the Ponta da Atalaja peninsula, about 6 km from Aljezur, in the town of Arrifana (Aljezur, Algarve, Portugal). Occupation dates ranged from 1130 to 1151, i.e. during the Almoravid period and the first Almohad stage. It is the second known and excavated Ribat of Al-Andalus and it was created by the Sufi master Ibn Qasi.

⁸ **ASÍN PALACIOS, Miguel** (1978) *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra and His Followers*, p. 122.

⁹ **LIVERMORE, H.V.** (1947) *A History of Portugal*, p. 72.

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Manuela Marin¹⁰ recorded the fact that spending *Ramadan* in a *ribat*, the place for retirement and devotional life, was another practice. In such case people left their houses and spent time in a *ribat* for practising the *ribat*:

The period of fasting was also regarded as a time of penitence by some; for example, Harun b. Salim (d. 236/850) used to sleep on the floor without a mattress. Others retired from ordinary social activities in order to preserve the purity of their piety, such withdrawals occurring even within the cities. The same Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ziyad whose generosity is so praised used to spend the fast of Ramadan in a house he owned near the Great Mosque of Cordoba, while Muhammad b. 'Umar b. Lubaba did not leave his residence during the fast except to attend prayers in the mosque. There were also people who left the cities during Ramadan and stayed in castles, practising the *ribat*. The first specific record we have of this fact comes from a slightly later time from the first half of the 5th/11th century, but use of the *ribat* as a place for retirement and devotional life was already common in the earlier period and we may reasonably assume that spending *Ramadan* in a *ribat* was, if not a common practice, at least a possibility already open to some.

But the figure who represents this period is the Muslim of Orihuela Ibn Al-Murabit, faqih, caddy, poet, and mystic, author of *Kitab Al-Zawahir Al-fikar*. This text bears the intellectual and political atmosphere of this fundamental moment of the history of Orihuela.

The cultural life of Orihuela highlights his members worldwide. Oratory and sermons had a fixed place in the religious and civic rituals of those Muslim societies and were indispensable for transmitting moral values. One of

¹⁰ MARIN, Manuela (1994) Muslim Religious Practices in Al-Andalus (2nd/8th-4th/10th Centuries). In: The Legacy of Muslim Spain, p. 885.

its members was Ibn Al-Jannan and Linda G. Jones said the following about him¹¹:

A profound concern to censure innovation (*bid'a*) in religious ortho-praxy prompted the fourteenth-century Egyptian Maliki *faqih* Ibn Al-Haij to reject the incorporation of novel sermons into the Canonical rituals. He advocated forbidding the *khutba khatmiyya* or "closing sermon," which was delivered customarily on Laylat Al-Qadr to commemorate the end of recitation of the entire Qur'an during Ramadan. He objected to this *khutba* because it was an "innovation" lacking precedent in the *Sunna* and insisted that the "Shari'a-prescribed sermons are renowned and well-known (*ak-khutab Al-shar'jyya ma'rufa mashhura*) and so too are their designated times and places. "Only these should be conducted in the congregational mosque or a mosque assigned to a religious expert (*masuban li-'alim*) or to someone with a reputation for good deeds and piety (*ma'ruf bi-l-khayr*), or assigned to the Sufi shaykhs¹². The preservation of one such *khutba*, composed by the thirteenth-century belletrist Ibn Al-Jannán of Orihuela¹³, shows that the custom was followed in Al-Andalus as well¹⁴."

The fact that AbuYa 'far Ibn 'Isam made a declaration of independence to Zayyán b. Mardanish in 1239 can be indebted to the assassination of Aziz b. Jattab by Zayyán b. Mardanish of Valencia. The biographers of Aziz b. Khattab highlights his scientific prestige. He was one of

¹¹ JONES, Linda G. (2012) *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 56.

¹² IBH AL-HAJJ, *Al-Madkahl*, vol. II, p. 295.

¹³ MOLINA LÓPEZ, Emilio (1980) Ibn Amira e Ibn Al-Yannan, fuentes para la historia de Al-Andalus en el siglo XIII. In: *Anales del Colegio Universitario de Almería*, 2, pp. 57-73.

JONES, Linda G. (2013) *A Nuptial Sermon by Ibn Al-Jannan: A Surprising Source on Commercial Relations Between Murcia and Genova (1245) La Corona catalanoaragonesa, l'Islam i el món mediterrani. Estudis d'història medieval en homenatge a la doctora Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol*: pp. 409-415.

¹⁴ IBN AL-MURABIT, *Zawahir Al fika*r, vol. II, pp. 533-546.

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the most respected scholars in his time and best erudites, due to his knowledge and thirst for knowledge. He became interested in the study, and achieved fame and popularity of all branches of knowledge, just as their ancestors did. In this way Ibn Al-Abbar testifies. Furthermore, he quickly confirms the excellence and prestige attained by them, paying particular attention to the legal and theological sciences. Khattab gave frequent lectures and his advice was highly prized by his disciples. Ibn Abd Al-Malik declares further that 'Aziz b. Khattab was a clear and eloquent speaker in the difficult art of rhetoric, as well as a fine composer of prose and verse. As a poet most of his verses were collected by Ibn Al-Zubayr, Ibn Al-Abbar, Ibn Sa'id and Al-Maqqari. They show his close relationship with the mystical Sufi movement, so ingrained in Murcia in the twelfth century and whose top figures are world famous¹⁵.

¹⁵ **MOLINA LÓPEZ, Emilio** (1978) Aziz B. Jattab, destacada personalidad política, científica y literaria murciana del siglo XIII. In: *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana*, N°. 4, pp. 63-89.

Sufi movement flourished in Spain from the tenth century on.

Name	City	Born	Death
Al-Talamanki Master of b. Asbagh (1109)			
Abu Muhammad ‘Abd-Al-Rahman Ibn Al-Hayy Al-Lurki	Lorca Todmir Murcia	1095?	1145- 1150?
Yumn Ibn Rizq (fuente Ibn Al-Arif) (<i>K Al-Zuhd</i>)	Tudela Ascalon - Palestina	830?	899?
Muhammad b. Waddah Al-Qurtubi (Book: Innovations) asceticism	Master of Ibn Masarra	840?	900 286
Ibn Masarra Al-Yabali	Cordova Cordoba	883 269	931
Yahya b. Mugahid of Elvira	Cordoboa	927?	977
Mohammed, son of Abulisam Tahir	Murcia	929?	989
Ismail b. Abd Allah Al-Ruayni (Al-Ruayni) Se fue a Pechina	Cordoba	950	1040
Muhammad b. ‘Isa of Elvira	Almeria?	1013?	1063?
Abd Allah b. Al-‘Arabi Father of Al-Arabi	Seville Unknown	1043 435	1099 493
Abd Al-Baqi b. Muhammad b. Asbagh			1109 502
Ibn Jamis Al-Yaburi, Abu ‘Abd Allah	El Algarbe Seville Seville	1060?	1110
Abu l-Hakam Ibn Barrayan Disciple of Ibn Al-Arif	Moroc Marrakesch	1068?	1141
Abu l-Abbas Ibn Al-Arif, Abenalarif	Almeria Marrakesh	1088	1141
Abu Bakr Al-Mayurqi	Majorca Bougie		1142 537
Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Al-Arabi	Seville Fez	1076 468	1148 543
Abu-l-Qasim Ahmad Ibn Al-Husayn Ibn Qasi	Silves – Portugal Silves	1101?	1151
Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ibn Saada	Xativa Xativa	1103	1170

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He was in Murcia in 1132 for some years			
Ibn Al-Mugahid	Sevilla	1129?	1179
Ibn Al-Jarrat	Seville Bougie	1116	1185
Abu l-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Abd Allah b. Ahmad Al-Ansari, known as " <i>Ibn Al-Yatim</i> ", " <i>Al-Balansi</i> " y " <i>Al-Andarasi</i> ", and as " <i>Al-Gazzal</i> <i>Disciple of Ibn Al-Arif</i>	Almeria	1125?	1185 581
Abu Madyan de Catiliana Symbolic Master of Ibn 'Arabi and Al-Shushturi	Cantillana-Sevilla Tlemecen -Argel	1116	1198
Abdelahae ben Abderramán el Caisi	Murcia	1141?	1201
Abu 'Abdallah Al-Shudhi Hallawi – Master of Ibn Al-Mar'a (Ibn Dahhaq)	Qadi of Seville		1203 600
Abu Al-Abbas as Sabti Ibn al -Arif	Ceuta Marrakesh	1129	1204
'Abd Al-Mun'im Al-Ghilyani Al-Yilyani, 'Abd Al-Mun'im	Graena Damascus	1136	1205
Ibn Al-Mar'a Al-Awsi (Ibn Dahhaq) Master of Ibn Arabi Master of Ibn Sab'in	Malaga Murcia - Todmir	1160?	1214 611
Abu Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad, confounded with his father being also known as " <i>Ibn Al-Yatim</i> ", " <i>Ibn Al-Balansi</i> ", " <i>Al-Andarasi</i> " y " <i>Al-Gazzal</i> <i>Disciple of Ibn Al-Arif through his father</i>	Almeria	1150 544	1224 621
Abu 'Abbas Al-Buni Ahmad Al-Buni Master of Ibn Sab'in			1225 622
Abu Ya'far b. Abd. Allah b. Muhammad b. Sidi-Buna Al-	Alicante? Mezquita	1167?	1227

Juza'i	Atzeneta en Vall de Guadalest		
Ibn Arabi Spiritual disciple of Ibn Al-Arif	Murcia - Todmir Damasco	1165	1240
Sahl Al-Azdi	Cújar (Granada) Granada	1163	1242
Ibn Muhammad b. 'Ali Ibn Ahla Presumed Master of Ibn Sab'in	Murcia Murcia		1247 645
Muhammad Ibn Suraqa al Satibí	Jativa	1196	1264
Ibn Mutarrafa Al-Judhami Al-A'ma	Murcia Murcia		1264 663
Abu'l Hasan Shushtari	Exfiliana-Guadix Tina Egypt	1212 605	1269
Abu Marwan Al-Yuhansi	Andalusia	1210?	1270?
Ibn Sa'bin	Valle de Ricote (Todmir) La Mecca	1217	1270
Outb Ibn Al-Qastallani		1217	1287
Abu Al-Abbas Al-Mursi	Murcia - Todmir Alexandre Egypt	1219	1287
Afif Al-Din Al-Tilimsani	North African	1213	1291
Abuali Abenhud, son of Yusuf Abenhud	Murcia Siria	1237?	1297
Ibn Abbad de Ronda	Ronda Fes	1333 733	1390 792

Before treating the famous Sufi Ibn Sab'in, of the Ricote Valley it is necessary to give a short introduction the Sufism movement abroad and in Spain. However, this is not an easy task since the history of the Islamic mysticism in Al-Andalus remains to be written.

Abroad

For the development abroad, the Dominican Priest Joseph Kenny wrote an interesting study¹⁶. A small part of it says that «Sufism originated from a search for something deeper than merely the externals of ritual prayer. Because the devotees of the movement spoke so much of inner experience and placed so much importance on their own liturgies or prayer meetings, the doctors of the law (*ulama*)¹⁷ were suspicious. Besides, the Şufis took the moral injunctions of the Qur'an seriously and were an open reproach to many corrupt politicians whose lives revolved only around the enjoyment of this world. This precarious period was marked by figures such as Ḥasan Al-Basri (d. 772), who is regarded as the ancestor of the Şufic brotherhoods, and Rabia Al-Adawiyya (d. 801), a great woman recluse who has been the subject of many studies and literary works an Egyptian film portrays her life. Proclaiming disinterested love of God, she was met one day carrying a torch in one hand and water in the other. Asked what these were for, she replied: "I am going to burn up heaven and quench the fires of hell, so that these two screens may fall away from the eyes of men, and they may see God with no motive of hope or fear. It is too bad that men will not worship or obey God without these two motives." She was speaking to Muslims who did not consider heavenly joy to consist primarily in seeing God but in enjoying the good things of garden of Paradise. Against such background the "pain of loss" of God is an inconceivable idea. Another figure of this period, Dhu-n-Nun the Egyptian (d. 859), was the first to elaborate a

¹⁶ KENNY, Joseph (1984) Sufism. In: *Nigerian Dialogue*, 4, pp. 11-16.

¹⁷ N.B. For typographical reasons, we have been forced to work without the transcription system of the Arabic words. Therefore we ask our lectors, especially specialists, to excuse the inevitable shortcomings.

theory of stages (*maqamat*) of the spiritual life and of experiential states of dispositions (*aḥwal*). Al-Muḥasibi (d. 857) insisted on the importance of examination of conscience and taught that only the vision of God's essence gives perfect happiness. Al-Bisṭāmī (d. 874) initiated a new tendency by undergoing a rigorous ascetic training in an attempt to strip away his outer self like a snake that sheds its skin, and thus get at the centre of his being. In this pure state in which he saw himself mirroring the attributes of God to the negation of his own self-consciousness, he spoke theopathic utterances (*shaṭaḥat*) such as "Glory to me how great is my glory". On the other hand, Al-Junayd (d. 910) was a cautious thinker, and the first to stress the necessity of purification of the will and mind in order to discover the primordial pact of the human race with God and thereby to be dissolved and be with God. Al-Junayd is more famous as the shaykh, or master, of Al-Hallaj.»

Al-Hallaj (858-922), whose life and works have been extensively studied by Louis Massignon¹⁸, was a remarkable Sufi. Many Sufi masters felt that it was inappropriate to share mysticism with the masses, yet Al-Hallaj openly did so in his writings and through his teachings. He thus began to make enemies. This was exacerbated by occasions when he would fall into trances which he attributed to being in the presence of God. During one of these trances, he would utter "I am The

¹⁸ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1922) *La passion d'Al-Hallāj, martyr mystique de l'Islam*, 2 vols, Paris.

MASSIGNON, Louis (1982) *The passion of Al-Hallaj*, tr. H. Mason (4 vols. Princeton UP.

MASSIGNON, Louis (1955) *Le Dīwān d'Al-Hallaj, Dīwān*, ed. L. Massignon (Paris: Guethner).

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Truth¹⁹”, which was taken to mean that he was claiming to be God, since *Al-Ḥaqq* "the Truth" is one of the Ninety Nine Names of Allah. In another controversial statement, Al-Hallaj claimed "There is nothing wrapped in my turban but God". Statements like these led to a long trial, and his subsequent imprisonment for 11 years in a Baghdad prison. He was publicly executed on March 26, 922. A line from one of his poems reads: "I will die in the religion of the cross. Mecca and Medina mean nothing more to me". This assertion has no explicitly Christian reference, nor was it intended as a repudiation of Islam. It merely indicates his personal way to God through suffering with love. Al Hallaj was the culmination of the struggling period of Ṣūfism.

Al-Andalus

Manuela Marin let us know that the first occurrence of the term "Sufi" is in the biography of ‘Abd Allah b. Nasr (d. 315/927). Only four years thereafter the death occurred of Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. Masarra (d. 319/931)²⁰. Ibn Masarra was a prominent figure in Al-Andalus in the development of religious thought and his doctrine is characterized as a mu'tazilism tinged with asceticism next to mysticism.

Some said that he was a Maliki jurist; others that he was an ascetic, and another group that he had Empedoclean

¹⁹ **ERNST, Carl W.** (1985) Hagiography to Martyrology: Conflicting Testimonies to a Sufi Martyr of the Delhi Sultanate. In: History of Religions, Vol. 24, N° 4, pp. 308-327. In p. 314.

²⁰ **MARIN, Manuela** (1994) Muslim Religious Practices in Al-Andalus (2nd/8th-4th/10th Centuries). In: The Legacy of Muslim Spain, p. 890.

philosophical ideas. Ibn Al-Fardi shows that the mystic thinking of Ibn Masarra Al-Yabali (d. 391/931) was based on the mystic ideology of the Egyptian Du Al-Nun (d. 245/860) and Abu Ya'qub Al-Nahrayuri (d. 300/912)²¹. Although Ibn Masarra past sometime in Egypt and could have been in contact with these two Egyptians, there were initially to Asín Palacios no documents available that could prove that Ibn Masarra was the first in the development of mystic thoughts²². His masters were his father, Abd Allah b. Masarra; a famous jurist of the Maliki School with ascetic doctrines, Muhammad Ibn Waddah and Abd Al-Salam Al-Jusani. Moreover, Ibn Hayyan shows that Ibn Massara also had knowledge of astrology, philosophy and medicine²³. After the death of his father in 899 in Mecca, Ibn Masarra went on a trip to the East for an unknown length of time. According to Al-Jattaba b. Maslama, it was more an escape since he had been accused of *zandaqa*. Apparently he was known as a teacher, as Ahmad b. Khalid, known as Ibn Al-Yabbab (d. 322/934) had written a treatise in refutation of the ideas of Ibn Masarra.

‘Abd Al-Rahman Al-Nasir li-din Allah (912-961) and his son, the emir Al-Hakan (961-976) favored scientists with religious books for the use of the Jewish community.

²¹ **SHAFIK ROUSHDY, Ahmed** (2010) *Miftāḥ Al-sa‘āda wa-taḥqīq taṭarīq Al-sa‘āda* (La llave de la felicidad y la realización del camino de la felicidad) de Ibn Al-‘Arīf (481/1088-536/1141) Doctoral Dissertation. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, pp. 339 p. In pp. 19-20.

²² **ASÍN PALACIOS, Miguel** (1946) *Ibn Masarra y su escuela*. In: *Obras escogidas*, Madrid: CSIC, I, p. 113.

ASÍN PALACIOS, Miguel (1914) *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra*.

²³ **ADDAS, Claude** (1992) *Andalusi Mysticism and the Ride of Ibn Arabi*, *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden, E.J. Brill), p. 914.

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Jewish scholars could have served as a vital link in the transmission of philosophy to their Muslim neighbors. Jewish scholars could also have had an influence on the way of religious thinking of Ibn Masarra. Moreover, deeper studying of these elements can add significant information to the meager knowledge of the beginnings of Islamic and Jewish philosophies in Al-Andalus²⁴. Probably Al-Andalus became a mirror image of 'Abbasid Baghdad²⁵, without losing their legitimate independence from Baghdad²⁶. This became clear after the death of Ibn Masarra.

Until 1972, researchers were not aware of the writings and biography of Ibn Masarra. They knew what Asín Palacios²⁷ stated in his work that only two titles of works of Ibn Masarra are known (from Ibn Al-'Arabi, who refers to a *Kitab Al-huruf*, and Ibn Al-Abbar, who mentions a *Kitab Al-tafsira*). However, in 1972 Muhammad Kamal Ibrahim Ja'far discovered two of his works in manuscript no. 3168 of the Chester Beatty Collection²⁸. *The book of*

²⁴ **STROUMSA, Sarah** (2012) Thinkers of "This Peninsula". Towards an Integrative Approach to the Study of Philosophy in Al-Andalus. In: Beyond Religious Borders. Interaction and Intellectual Exchange in the Medieval Islamic World. Edited by David M. Freidenreich and Miriam Goldstein. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 44-53 and notes on pp. 176-181.

²⁵ **VAHID BROWN, J.** (2006) Andalusí Mysticism: A Recontextualization. In: Journal of Islamic Philosophy 2, pp. 69-101. In p. 72.

²⁶ **SAFRAN, Janina** (2001) The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in Al-Andalus (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

²⁷ **ASÍN PALACIOS, Miguel** (1914-1997) The mystical philosophy of Ibn Masarra. Reprint E.J. Brill, Leiden, p. 41.

²⁸ **MUHAMMAD KAMAL IBRAHIM, Ja'far** (1972) Min mu'allafat Ibn Masarra Al-mafqda.

the properties of letters (Kitab khawass Al-huruf) and *The epistle on contemplation (Risalat Al-i'tibar)*²⁹. The colophon of the manuscript no. 3168 was signed by the copyist, `Uthman b. Yusuf b. Muḥammad b. Arslan Al-Ḥanafī Al-Ḥariri, Cairo (686-7-1287-8)³⁰. On the other hand, in 1992 the researcher finally had at hand a biography of Ibn Masarra³¹. A third work of Ibn Masarra, *The Monotheism of those Whose Knowledge is Certain (the Kitab tawhid Al-muqinin)* is mentioned by *Shams Al-Din Al-Qurtubi* (d. 1173)³² and by Ibn Al-Mar'a in his *Sharh Al-irshad*³³. Apparently, Ibn Massara was influenced by the rational school of Jahiz and its scientific thought. Unfortunately, many of his works were lost³⁴.

ARBERRY, A.J. (1972) *The Chester Beatty Library*, vol. 1, pp. 68-69.

See also: **TORNERO, Emilio** (1993) *Noticia sobre la publicación de obras inéditas de Ibn Masarra*. In: *Al-Qantara* 14, pp. 47-64.

²⁹ **STROUMSA, Sarah & SVIRI, Sara** (2009) *The beginning of Mystical Philosophy in Al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra and his epistle on contemplation*. In: *Jersusalem studies in Arabic and Islam*, 36, pp. 201-253. In p. 203.

³⁰ **VAHID BROWN, J.** (2006) *Andalusi Mysticism: A Recontextualization*. In: *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 2, pp. 69-101. In p. 111.

³¹ **AL-KHUSHANI, Muhammad Ibn Harit** (1992) *Akhbar Al-Fuqaha' wa Al-Muhaddithin*, estudio y edición crítica por María Luisa Avila y Luis Molina, Madrid.

³² **CRUZ HERNÁNDEZ, M.** (1993) *Historia del pensamieto en el mundo islámico*, rev. And exp. Ed., 3 vols. Madrid Alianza Editorial, p. 345.

³³ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1929) *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam*, Paris, p. 70.

³⁴ **MOHAMMAD K. JA'FAR** (1973) *Les écrits perdus d'Ibn Massara*. In: *Revue de la faculté de pédagogie*, N° 3, Tripoli (Libye), pp. 27-63. Cited by 'ALI DAHROUGE (1983) *Le probleme de l'âme chez Ibn Sab'in*. Étude analytique du Budd Al-'Arif. Thèse pour le Doctorat de 3ème Cycle. Université de Paris I. Pantheon-Sorbonne, p. 13.

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Pilar Garrido Clemente of the University of Murcia mentions in one of her many articles of Ibn Masarra 3 other manuscripts³⁵:

El Compendio de la Mudawwana de Malik³⁶.
El Kitab Al-Tabyin o 'Libro de la clarificación'³⁷.

Dudoso:

El K. Al-Garib Al-muntaqa min kalam ahl Al-tuqa³⁸:

³⁵ **GARRIDO CLEMENTE, Pilar** (2009) Ibn Masarra a través de las fuentes: Obras halladas y escritos desconocidos. In: Estudios Humanísticos. Filología, 31, pp. 87-106.

³⁶ **VIGUERA Y CORRIENTE, M.J.** (1982) Crónica del califa 'Abdarrahman III an-Nasir entre los años 912 y 942 [Ibn Hayyan, Al-Muqtabas V], Zaragoza, p. 99.

FIERRO BELLO, Maribel (1987) La heterodoxia en Al-Andalus durante el período omeya, Madrid: IHAC. p. 115.

³⁷ **SAMS AL-DIN AL-QURTUBI** (0000) Al-Tradkira fi ahwal Al-mawta, Beirut, without date, p. 341.

ADDAS, C. (1993) Andalusī Mysticism and the Rise of Ibn 'Arabī", In: The Legacy of Muslim Spain, ed. S. Khadra Jayyusi, Leiden: Brill, 1993, vol. II, p. 913.

³⁸ **V. 'IYAD, AL-GUNYA** (1982) Fihrist suyuj Al-qadi 'Iyad, ed. Mahir Zuhayr Yarrar, Beirut, 1982, pp. 92-94, n° 28.

GARRIDO, V.P. (2006) Ibn Masarra. In: J. Lirola Delgado y J.M. Puerta Vilchez (ed.), Biblioteca de Al-Andalus: De Ibn Al-Labbāna a Ibn Al-Ruyuli [Enciclopedia de la Cultura Andalusí, I] 4, (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl de Estudios Árabes), N° 788, pp. 150-154.

GARRIDO CLEMENTE, Pilar (0000) Sobre el Kitab Al-Garib Al-muntaqa min kalam ahl Al-tuqa de Ibn Jamis de Evora, atribuido a Ibn Masarra. In: Al-Qantara, Madrid (In Press).

Masters in or from Al-Andalus	Masters abroad
<p>Abd Allah b. Masarra (his father)</p> <p>Muhammad Ibn Waddah (Famous Jurist Maliki School, ascetic doctrines)</p> <p>---Dul-l-Nun Al-Misri (Sufi)</p> <p>---Sari Al-Saqati (Sufi)</p> <p>---Bisr Al-Hafi (Sufi)</p> <p>Abd Al-Salam Al-Jusani (Ascetic doctrines)</p> <p>Muhammad b. Harit Al-Jusani (alfaquí from Cordoba living abroad)</p> <p>Jalil Al-Gafla (friend of his father and free thinker – Mu'tazila)</p>	<p>---Dul-l-Nun Al-Misri (Sufi)</p> <p>---Sari Al-Saqati (Sufi)</p> <p>---Bisr Al-Hafi (Sufi)</p> <p>(abroad or through Ibn Waddah)</p> <p>Ahmad b. Nasr b. Ziyad (alfaquí maliki)</p> <p>Abu Sa'id Ibn Al-A'rabi (Sufi)</p> <p>Abu Ya'qub Al-Nahrayurs (Master)</p> <p>Sahl Al-Tustari (Sufi)</p>
Disciple:	
Ibn Masarra	
Disciples of Ibn Masarra:	
<p>-Muhammad Ibn Wahb Ibn Al-Sayqal Al-Qurtubi</p> <p>-Muhammad Ibn Al-Madini</p> <p>-Hayy b. 'Abd Al-Malik, from Cordoba</p> <p>-Jalil b. 'Abd Al-Malik (d. 323/935) from Cordoba</p> <p>-Muhammad b. Sulayman Al-'Ukki (d. 357/968) from Moron</p> <p>-Aban b. 'Utman b. Sa'id Al-Mubassir b. Galib b. Fayd Al-Lajmi, Abu l-Walid from Sidonia (d. 377/987)</p> <p>-Ahmad b. Faray b. Muntal b. Qays, Abu 'Umar (d. 344/955), from Cordoba.</p> <p>- 'Abd Al-'Aziz b. Hakam b. Ahmad (child of the emir</p>	

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Muhammad), Abul-Asbag (d. 387/997) from Cordoba.
-Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar b. Jayr Al-Qasysi, Abu
'Abd Allah (d. 382/992), native from Jaen living in Cordoba
-Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Hamdun b. 'Isa b. Sabi' Al-
Jawlani, Abu 'Abd Allah (d. 380/990) from Cordoba
-Muhammad b. Mufarriy b. 'Abd Allah b. Mufarriy Al-
Ma'afiri Al-Fanni, Abu 'Abd Allah (d. 371/982) from
Cordoba
-Rasid b. Muhammad b. Fath Al-Dayyay (d. 376/987) from
Cordoba
-Tarif, mawla, of the Vizier Ahmad b. Muhammad b.
Hudayr, from Cordoba
-Ahmad b. Walid b. 'Abd Al-Hamid b. 'Awsaya Al-Ansari,
Abu 'Umar, known as Ibn Ujt 'Abdun (d. 376/986) from
Pechin.

During his life Ibn Masarra did not have problems. However, after his death the jurists carried out a veritable persecution of his disciples, the Masarriya, in Cordoba and later in Almeria. Abd Al-Rahman III condemned his works and followers, in 340/952 and 345/956, by royal decrees which were read in the mosques of Cordoba and Madinat-Al-Zahra³⁹. The latest condemnation known was in the year 957. The group that denounced him as a heretic became too strong for the Caliph, who was forced to take drastic measures. A personal observation of Al-Khushani states⁴⁰:

³⁹ **IBN HAYYAN** (1998) Al-muqtaba V. In: **BERMEJO, V.**, The 'Zalmedina' of Cordoba. The Formation of Al-Andalus: Part I. Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Co., p. 416.

⁴⁰ **AL-KHUSHANI, Muhammad Ibn Harit** (1992) Akhbar Al-Fuqaha' wa Al-Muhaddithin, estudio y edición crítica por María Luisa Avila y Luis Molina, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo árabe, p. 178.

DANE, Kirstin Sabrina (2006) Power Discourse and Heresy in Al-Andalus: The Case of Ibn Masarra. Thesis submitted to the Faculty of

The people are divided into two camps [with regard to Ibn Masarra]; one camp goes so far as to hold him as an authoritative teacher of knowledge and asceticism on account of what has been manifested to them of the efficacy of his learning and the sincerity of his asceticism. The other camp denounces him as a heretic on account of what has been manifested to them of his theological disputation on the issue of promise and punishment and his esoteric interpretations [ta'wil] of verses of the Qur'an and for his refusal to passively adhere to the known sciences in Al-Andalus.

Apparently none of the direct disciples of Ibn Masarra seem to have suffered persecution. They all lived in Cordoba. The situation was different for Ahmad b. Walid b. 'Abd Al-Hamid b. 'Awsaya Al-Ansari, Abu 'Umar, known as Ibn Ujt 'Abdun (d. 376/986) from Pechina in the province of Almeria. The qadi Muhammad b. Yabqa offered him the chance to repent. Strangely enough, there remained only some news in the documents about the name of one of the defendants who curiously came from Pechina. One will see that in Pechina, the Masarran Community existed until the XI century.

Pechina (Almería)

After the death of Ibn Masarra, his disciples had a difficult time and the same can be said of future followers. Ismail b. Abd Allah Al-Ruayni or Al-Ruayni was an Andalusian Sufi thinker of the Masarran Sufi School (Córdoba, 950-

Graduate Studies and Research. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for The degree of Masters of Arts. Institute of Islamic Studies. McGill University, Montreal, pp. 59-60.

⁴⁰ **VAHID BROWN, J.** (2006) Muhammad b. Masarra Al-Jabali and his Place in Medieval Islamic Intellectual History: Towards a Reappraisal. Thesis presented to the Division of Philosophy, Religion and Psychology Reed College. (Portland, Oregon, USA), p. 53.

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1040). He was born in Cordoba in 950, and probably indoctrinated by a direct disciple of Ibn Masarra. Threatened by his doctrines in 980 he was forced to leave the Caliphate court, having already achieved philosophical and religious notoriety. He took refuge on the left bank of the river near the village of Pechina. This place near Almería already had welcomed a core of Masarrians. Al-Ruayni became Imam of this community, exerting strict fasting and penance. The Muslims in Pechina recognized a religious leader or Imam. The people obeyed him as if he were the true Caliph. Beside that, they were paying him the tax of alms or zakat and keep the esoteric relationships among them as those of a secret society. In this community he also joined his family: his son Abu Harun and a daughter who became an educated teacher of doctrine. His daughter had a reputation for extraordinary culture, played by her own free exam of the hidden meanings of the Qur'an, and she deserved the title of a dogmatic theologian. She was called the *Ruayniya*, but apparently her name was Fatma. Ruayniya's husband, the doctor Ahmad, and her son Yahya, as well as another child of Ismail b. Abd Allah Al-Ruayni, were all Masarrians, too.

Almería

Their teachings remained in effect until after the death of Al-Ruayni, which occurred in 1040. In those years another Sufi would join them, Muhammad b. 'Isa of Elvira, influencing other Sufis from Almeria as Abenalarif. Apparently, Almería became the metro-polises of all Sufis of Al-Andalus.

And so we observe that Abu l-‘Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad Ibn Al-‘Arif (d. 36/1141), author of the «Mahasín Al-Machalis», had very soon grouped around him a lot of fans, not only from Almeria and its region, but also from several other parts of Andalusia, particularly from Seville, Granada and the Algarves. Abu l-Hakam ‘Abd Al-Salam b. ‘Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Barrajan (d. 536/1141) came from Seville. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Al-Husayn Al-Mayurqi (d. 527/1142) came from Granada and finally Abu l-Qasim Ahmad b. Husayn Ibn Qasi (d. 546/1151) came from Algarbes.

Ibn Al-Arif⁴¹ (nickname) or Abul Abbas Ahmad Ibn Mohammed Ibn Musa Ibn Ata Allah Al-Mariyyi Al-Sanhaji, also known as Al-Urruf (born July 23, 1088 in Almeria and died 1141 in Ceuta) was a famous Andalusian Sufi.

He was especially well known as the founder of a probable Sufi school or tariqa which was based on the teachings of Ibn Masarra, and as the author of *Mahasin Al-Majalis* (*The Attractions of Mystical Sessions*). However, in more recent scholarship the relationship between Ibn Masarra and Ibn Al-‘Arif seems less obvious⁴².

⁴¹ **SHAFIK ROUSHDY, Ahmed** (2010) *Miftāḥ Al-sa‘āda wa-taḥqīq taṭīq Al-sa‘āda* (La llave de la felicidad y la realización del camino de la felicidad) de Ibn Al-‘Arīf (481/1088-536/1141) Doctoral Dissertation. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, pp. 339 p.

SHAFIK ROUSHDY, Ahmed (2012) *Filosofía y mística de Ibn Al’Arif: Su Miftah Al-sa’ada*. In: *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, Vol. 29, Number 2, pp. 433-448.

⁴² **AKASOY, Anna** (2012) Andalusian exceptionalism: the example of “Philosophical Sufism” and the significance of 1212. In: *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 4:1, pp. 113-117.

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Tumba Ibn Al-'Arif en Marrakesh
Photo Ibnalarif

Ibn Al-Arif spent most of his life, in Almeria, in Al-Andalus at the height of the Almoravid power. His father came from Tangier and his family belonged to the Berber tribe of the Sanhaja. Apparently, Almeria was a center of Sufism at that time. He and Ibn Barrajan, another Andalusian Sufi based in Seville, gathered around themselves a large number of followers, which attracted the attention of the Almoravid authorities. In 1141 both men were called to Marrakech by the sultan Ali Ibn Yusuf where they were accused of "professing heterodox doctrines". Ibn Al-Arif defended himself and was released, but died shortly thereafter. According to Ibn Al-Abbar, either "the sultan was convinced of Ibn Al-Arif's excellence and piety and ordered him to be released and escorted to Ceuta" where he died of an illness, or "Ibn Al-Arif was poisoned on his return journey, while making the sea crossing." His tomb is in Marrakech.

A quite interesting study about Ibn Barrajan was written by Jose Bellver⁴³. Although Ibn Barrajan (d. 536/1141) was one of the foremost Sufi masters in Al-Andalus, he remains a controversial figure. He is mainly known for an accurate prediction of the Muslim capture of Jerusalem on 583/1187, for his close relationship with the other leading Andalusian Sufi master of his time, Ibn Al-Arif (d. 537/1143) who had an obscure death. Ibn Barrajan is not mentioned in Ibn Bashkuwal's *Sila* -the main source for study of the Andalusian ulema of this time- and as a result has been taken to be an outsider among the Andalusian ulema, one who threatened the theological and political establishment.

Ibn Barrajan's life ran parallel to the Almoravid dominion over Al-Andalus (1091-1145). Ibn Barrajan (d. 536/1141) is known for his obscure death after being summoned, along with Ibn Al-Arif, by the Almoravid sultan All b. Yihut b. Tashufin (d. 537/1143), shortly before the revolt of the Muridan in the Algarve (539/1144) led by Ibn Qasi (d. 546/1151) and the ascent to power of the Almohads. Ibn Barrajan is referred to in a few sources as imam and it has been alleged that in some 130 villages the Friday sermons were read in his name rather than in that of the sultan. These textual references within the context of the revolt of the Muridun shortly after his death, along with his having been summoned by the sultan, his trial, imprisonment, and death, have sketched a picture of a political activist, a self-proclaimed imam, and a rebellious Mahdi who challenged the political and religious authority

⁴³ **BELLVER, Jose** (2013) "Al-Ghazali of Al-Andalus": Ibn Barrajan, Mahdism, and the Emergence of learned Sufism on the Iberian Peninsula. In: *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 133, N°. 4, pp. 659-681.

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of his time and was eventually executed for this insubordination.

Ibn Barrajan's summons and death took place against a background of political, economic, and military crisis in Al-Andalus caused by the Christian advance onto the peninsula and accentuating the decline of the Almoravids during the first half of the sixth/twelfth century. Due to Almoravid passivity in the face of the Christian threat, the Andalusian population sought the leadership of members of the judiciary, the fuqahī⁴⁴.

Today the opinion of this sufī is as follows:

Abu-l-Hakam Abd Al-Salam Ibn Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Mohammad Ibn Barrajan (born in Seville where he lived, he died in Marrakesh 1141) was one of the greatest Sufi figures of Al-Andalus and a hadith scholar. He spread his teachings in the first half of the 12th century. He wrote a two-volume commentary on the names of Allah, a famous tafseer, and *Ida Al-hikma* (unedited). His writings had a great influence on Ibn Arabi. He died in prison in Marrakesh, when he was summoned to that city by the Almoravid sultan who feared his influence. Against the wishes of the sultan he received an official burial on the initiative of Ibn Harzihim.

Among remarkable occurrences is to be noted that Ibn Barraján⁴⁵ says in his Commentary on “Alif, Laf”m, Mim

⁴⁴ **BELLVER, Jose** (2013) “Al-Ghazali of Al-Andalus”: Ibn Barrajan, Mahdism, and the Emergence of learned Sufism on the Iberian Peninsula. In: *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 133, N°. 4, pp. 659-681.

⁴⁵ The author of a commentary on the Kurán which he explained after the mystic system of the Sufie. He died in the city of Morocco A. H.

the Greeks have been overcome: (Kur. XXX) that Jerusalem will remain in the hands of the Greeks until the year 583: they will then be overcome and it will be captured and become the house of Islám to the end of time" taken from a calculation of the verse—and so it came to pass. Abu Shámah⁴⁶ observes that this prophecy of Ibn Barraján is the one of the most remarkable that has occurred, for Ibn Barraján died some time before the event, and the precise date of his death is unknown.

Ibn Sidi Buna of the province Alicante.

There was a sufi Ya'far b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Sidi Buna Al-Juza'i (d. 624/1227) living in Alicante. He

531 (1141-2) Ibn Khall, (art. Muhi u'ddin-b-uz- Zaki) adds that from the time he met with the verse, and learnt Ibn Barraján's account of it, he searched for the commentary and found the passage written marginally in a different hand from that of the text and is ignorant whether or not it be an interpolation. He also found a cabalistic calculation made from the words "a few years" in the verse of the Kurán—which runs: "The Greeks have been overcome in the nearest part of the land, but after their defeat they shall overcome within a few years." See also Sale's Kurán. Cited by: **JALÁLU'DDÍN A'S SUYÚTI & JARRET, H.S.** (1881) History of the Caliphs, Calcutta, p. 479.

⁴⁶ Abu'l Kásim A'bdu'r Rahman, surnamed Shiháb u'ddín and called Abu Shámah from a mole on his left temple. He was born at Damascus A. H. 599 (1202) He was a jurisconsult, a grammarian, a traditionalist and an historian. He has left two abridgements of the history of Damascus, one in 15, the other in 5 Vols. besides the biographies of Nur-u'ddin and Saladin, and several other works on theology and grammar. De Slane, I. K. Cited by:

JALÁLU'DDÍN A'S SUYÚTI & JARRET, H.S. (1881) History of the Caliphs, Calcutta, p. 479.

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was buried⁴⁷ in the mosque of Atzeneta, in the Vall de Guadalest (province of Alicante).

Ibn Saada, a Sufi in Murcia.

Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ibn Saada⁴⁸ was an inhabitant of Xativa, but his ancestors dwelt in Valencia. Having received lessons in his native place from many men distinguished for learning, he travelled to the western provinces of Spain for the same purpose. In 520/1126 he journeyed to the East, and there cultivated jurisprudence and other branches of knowledge.

He made the pilgrimage in the following year, and on his return to Egypt, he frequented the society of Abu Tahir Ibn Auf, as-Silafi and other illustrious doctors. In the year 526/1132 he returned to Murcia with a vast stock of information in the Traditions, Koran-reading, koranic interpretation, law, philology and scholastic theology. He had a inclination for Sufism. Being appointed member of the town council and preacher at the great mosque of Murcia, he began to teach the Traditions and jurisprudence, and he exercised the functions of *kadi* in the same city till the downfall of the Almoravides.

⁴⁷ **FIERRO BELLO, Maribel** (2000) El espacio de los muertos: fetuas andalusíes sobre tumbas y cementerios. In: L'urbanisme dans l'occident musulman au moyen âge: aspects juridiques / Maribel Fierro (aut.), Jean-Pierre van Staëvel (aut.), Patrice Cressier, pp. 153-190. In p. 166.

CALERO SECALL, Isabel (1987) Los Banu Sidi Buna. Separata de la Revista "Sharq Al Andalus, Nº 4, Universidad de Alicante, pp. 35-44.

⁴⁸ **IBN KHALLIKAN** (1843) Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary, Volume 2, p. 501.

He then passed to the kadiship of Xativa, and taught Traditions not only there, but in Murcia and Valencia, in which places also he filled the office of *Khatib*, or public preacher. Previously to this, he had taught Traditions at Almeria. He died at Xativa on the last day of Zu 'l-Hijja, in the year 565/1170, leaving one single work. He was born in the month of Ramadán, in the year 596/1103.

We learn from Asín Palacios⁴⁹ that in the twelfth century a disciple of Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), called Ibn Sa'ada, wrote in Murcia a Sufi book entitled *Shajarah Al-Wahm Al-mutaraqqiyya ila Durwah Al-Fahm (Tree of the Imagination by Which One Ascends to the Path of Intellection)*.

Ibn Al-Mar'a Ibn Dahhaq in Murcia

Ibn Al-Mar'a Ibn Dahhaq (d. 611/1214), who taught in Murcia, had seen and discussed in writing at least one of Ibn Masarra's works (the *Kitab tawhid Al-muqinin*). This work is cited by Ibn Al-Mar'a in his *Sharh Al-Irshad*. The Murcian Ibn Al-'Arabi knew some of Ibn Masarra's works, because he refers to them four times. Ibn Sab'in of the Ricote Valley in Murcia refers in two of his works to Ibn Masarra. Finally, Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shushtari, disciple of Ibn Sab'in, mentions Ibn Masarra in a poem that lists the spiritual forebears of his master⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ Cfr. *Tecmila*, b. 746, p. 225. See: **ASÍN PALACIOS, Miguel** (1914) *Abenmasarra y su escuela. Orígenes de la filosofía Hispano-Musulmana*. Madrid, E. Maestre, p. 162.

⁵⁰ **VAHID BROWN, J.** (2006) *Muhammad b. Masarra Al-Jabali and his Place in Medieval Islamic Intellectual History: Towards a Reappraisal*. Thesis presented to the Division of Philosophy, Religion and Psychology Reed College. (Portland, Oregon, USA), p. 106.

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Ibn Al-Mar'a Ibn Dahhaq (d. 611/1214) was a contemporary of Ibn 'Arabi and adherent of the Shudhiyyah. He was exiled from Malaga to Murcia. He was apparently well versed in the Sufi tradition of Andalusis, mentioning in his works Ibn Masarra's *Kitab Al-tawhid Al-muqimim* and writing commentary on Ibn Al-'Arif famed *Mahasin Al-majali*.

According to Massignon⁵¹, Ibn Al-Mar'a Ibn Dahhaq was Ibn Sab'in's instructor in Sufism and taught him the doctrine of *tahqiq Al-tawhid*.

Muslim Hermetists

Muslim Hermetists: Among the Sufi Hermetists we find Abu 'Abdallah Al-Shudhi of Seville, Ibn Mutarrif the Blind of Murcia, Muhammad Ibn Ahla of Lorca and Al-Hajj Yasin Al-Maghribi. In *La Voie et la Loi*, (pp. 279-80) Ibn Khaldun notes that "a large group of people from eastern Spain and the Ricote valley" were followers of Hermeticism. Ibn Sab'in followed the same doctrine, maybe later on a theoretical Sufism or gnosis (*ma'rifah* or *'irfan*)⁵².

⁵¹ **MASSIGNON, L.** (1982) *The Passion of Al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*. 4 Vols. Translated from the French by H. Mason, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Vol. II, p. 316.

⁵² **COOPER, Elisabeth Jane** (2006) *Is Rational Mysticism Compatible with Feminism? A critical examination of Plotinus and Kashani*. Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Ph.D. in Philosophy in the University of Canterbury, p. 14.

Abu ‘Abdallah Al-Shudhi of Seville

Abu ‘Abdallah Al-Shudhi (d. circa 600/1203) of Seville, now buried in Tlemcen, is there known as Sidi Al-Halwi. He was a *Mutakallim* follower of Al-Ash’ari. Al-Shudhi’s teachings were proclaimed heretical by a number of ‘*ulama*’ in Seville, forcing him to emigrate to Tlemcen, where he continued to preach⁵³. The Shudhiyya order was established by Abu ‘Abdallah Al-Shudhi, an exiled *qadi* of Seville⁵⁴.

The first members of the Shudhiya movement were Ibn Al-Mar’a and Ibn Ahla of Lorca. When Ibn Khatib⁵⁵ deals in his work *Rawdat Al-ta’rif* the doctrine of Al-Shudhi, that one of the absolute unit, he remarks that the doctrine had many adherents in the Andalusian Levante. This event was especially the case in the valley of Ricote. Therefore, one cannot forget the familiar entailment of Ibn Sab’in with the population of Ricote⁵⁶.

⁵³ **GARCÍA-ARENAL Mercedes** (2005) *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdis of the Muslim West*, p. 145.

⁵⁴ **JOHNSON, N. Scott** (1995) Ibn Sab’in, Shushtari and the Doctrine of Absolute Unity. In: *Sufi. A journal of Sufism*, Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications. Issue 25, pp. 24-31.

⁵⁵ **LISAN AL-DIN IBN AL-KHATIB** (1970) *Rawdat Al-ta’rif bi’l-Hubb Al-Sharif*, ed. M. Kattani, 2 vols. Casablanca: Dar Al-Thaqafa, Vol. II, p. 604.

⁵⁶ **CARMONA GONZALEZ, Alfonso** (2007) De nuevo sobre Ibn Sab’in. In: 4º Congreso Internacional Valle de Ricote “Despeirta tus Sentidos”. Centro cultural de Ricote del 8 a 11 de Noviembre de 2007. Edición: Consorcio Turístico Mancomunidad “Valle de Ricote”, pp. 159-162. In p. 160.

Ibn Ahla

Abû 'Abdullah Muhámmad Ibn 'Ali Ibn-Ahla (d. 645/1247), was a native of Murcia and famous *mutakallim*. Like the Sufi rebel Ibn Qasi, he started a semiclandestine movement at Lorca with a view to future political leadership. He was one of the first Shudhiya, together with Ibn Al-Mara'a. Ibn Al-Zubayr notes the fairness with which Ibn Ahla controlled Lorca, in the depths of the Grand Mosque, while remaining attached to the secret doctrine of Ibn Al-Mar'a, until his death⁵⁷.

Consequently, Ibn Ahla⁵⁸ was a disciple of Ibn Al-Mar'a from whom he took his doctrine (*madhab*). A presumed teacher of Ibn Sab'in. Fierro Bello⁵⁹ indicates that Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Ahla was the follower of Ibn Sab'in, rebelling in Lorca in the years of the submission of the city by the Christians (1244-1245). He is credited with having made a large equity reign (*taswiya*). Although the establishment of justice on earth is associated with the figure of the Mahdi, it appeared that Ibn Ahla did not proclaim this in Lorca.

⁵⁷ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1975) *La passion de Husayn Ibn Mansur Hallaj. Martyr mystique de l'Islam. Tome II. La survie de Hallaj.* Editions Gallimard. Paris, pp. 327-328 and 332.

⁵⁸ **PUERTA VILCHEZ, José María** (2002) Ibn Ahla, Abu 'Abd Allah. In: J. Lirola Delgado y J.M. Puerta Vilchez (eds). *Enciclopedia de Al-Andalus. Diccionario de Autores y Obras Andalusies. Tomo I, A-Ibn B*, Granada, 422-6, N° 224.

⁵⁹ **FIERRO BELLO, Maribel** (1999) Doctrinas y movimientos de tipo mesiánico en Al-Andalus. In: *Milenarismos y milenaristas en la Europa medieval: IX Semana de Estudios Medievales*, Nájera, 1998. Coord. Por José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte, pp. 159-176. In p. 172.

KNYSH, Alexander D. (1968) *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image...*, New York, p. 345.

Ibn Ahla is usually counted by Muslim heresiographers among the “people of oneness” (*ahl Al-wahda*), although he may also have entertained the Isma‘ili (*batini*) belief in the impending advent of the messianic world-restorer, which prompted him to make a bid for power in Lorca. As with Ibn Qasi, he was soon thrown out of Lorca and had to fly to Murcia. He died in the year 1245, two years after the capture of the city by the Christians⁶⁰.

Ibn Ahla exerted a strong moral influence over his fellow citizens during the dysfunctional Hud’s State between 1239 and 1247. People felt a great respect for his integrity⁶¹ and justice to reign in the city. Ibn Ahla stated in his *Tadkira* a doctrine on the theological and social reform of the *Umma*. In other words, Murcian Sufism was totally interwoven in the political life of the town⁶².

⁶⁰ **IBAN SAB’IN**. *Budd Al-‘arif*, pp. 20-21; **KATTOURA, George** (1977) *Das Mystische und Philosophische System des Ibn Sab’in*. Unpublished thesis, University of Tübingen, pp. 14-22; cf. **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1962) *Ibn Sab’in et la ‘conspiration anti-hallagienne’ en Andalousie et en Orient du XIIIe siècle*. In: *Études d’orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal*: Paris, G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, Vol. 2: pp. 661-683. In pp. 669-670; **FIERRO BELLO, Maribel** (2013) *Heresy and Political legitimacy in Al-Andalus* - Andrew P. Roach and James R. Simpson (eds.), *Heresy and the making of European culture. Medieval and Modern Perspectives*. Ashgate, p. 895. **KNYSH, Alexander** (1999) *Ibn ‘Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*. State University of New York, p. 345.

⁶¹ **CARMONA GONZALEZ, Alfonso** (2007) *De nuevo sobre Ibn Sab’in*. In: 4º Congreso Internacional Valle de Ricote “Despeirta tus Sentidos”. Centro cultural de Ricote del 8 a 11 de Noviembre de 2007. Edición: Consorcio Turístico Mancomunidad “Valle de Ricote”, pp. 159-162. In p. 159.

⁶² **GUICHARD, Pierre** (2001) *Al-Andalus frente a la conquista cristiana: los musulmanes de Valencia*. Biblioteca Nueva. Universidad de València, pp. 170-171.

Ibn Mutarrif the Blind of Murcia

Ali b. Muhammad b. Mutarrif Al-Yudami Al-Darir (d. 663/1264) was a Murcian student and disciple of Ibn Ahla, who propagated his doctrine in the mosques of Lorca and Murcia. He took the doctrine (*madhhab*) of Ibn Ahla, in which he emphasized and made propaganda of Ibn Ahla's life. At the time of his death he directed most of his disciples and sat in the mosque of Lorca to read the holy book as interpreted (*taríaq*). He taught the doctrine in his house, much as did his master and his followers. Then he moved to Murcia, where he did the same until his death in 663 or 664. He was a propagator of evil in this doctrine, ignoring all sciences. Apparently he allowed his followers to drink wine and to take more than four wives⁶³. In this context it is interesting to see what the doctoral thesis of Jahar is saying⁶⁴:

Ibn Sab'in's teachings, for example, claimed that *salat or saum* (fasting in Ramadan) for those who had reached the level of real '*ulama* (sing. *alim*) was unnecessary. Moreover, his direct

⁶³ **AL-SAKHAWI**. *Al-Qawl Al-munbi*, fol. 93b; **LISAN AL-DIN IBN AL-KHATIB** (1970) *Rawdat Al-ta'rif bi'l-Hubb Al-Sharif*, ed. M. Kattani, 2 vols. Casablanca: Dar Al-Thaqafa, Vol. II, p. 604, note 1424; **KATTOURA**. *Die Mystische und Philosophische System*, pp. 18-19; **MASSIGNON**. "Ibn Sab'in" p. 670. Cited by: **KNYSH, Alexander** (1999) *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*. State University of New York, p. 353. See also: **MARIN, M.** (2000) *Mujeres en Al-Andalus*, Madrid. (*Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de Al-Andalus, XI*), p. 407.

⁶⁴ **JAHAR, Asep Saepudin** (1999) *Abu Ishaq Al-Shatibi's reformulation of the concept of Bida'a: a study of his Al-i'tisam*. A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts. Institute of Islamic Studies. McGill University Montreal, Canada, p. 20.

challenge to Malikite jurists contained an indictment against the readiness of jurists to permit men to have more than four wives, which was forbidden by the *mashhur Al-fuqaha'*, and to allow the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

For Ibn Sab'in, the blend of *fiqh*, theology (*kalam*), Sufism and philosophy is important. *Fiqh* is the road to the *Shari'a*, *Ash'ariyya* the road to theology and Sufism the road to God's *haqiqa*. For Ibn Sab'in, *fiqh* is not the only path to that reality (*haqiqa*), for it is based on reason alone, particularly *qiyas* (*ratio legis*), and hides, therefore, God's light from His servants. By his logic, therefore, it is jurists who have gone astray⁶⁵.

The Influence of the Sufis on Political Matters.

Ibn Al-Arif (1088-1141) highlighted as a teacher and confessor of a new rule of religious life inspired by the school of Al-Ruayni. Ibn Arabi states that he had studied the ideas of Al-Ruayni. On July 7, 1198, Ramadan, Ibn Arabi traveled to Almería to visit his friend Abu Abdullah Al-Gazal, disciple of Ibn Al-Arif. "I had the idea of a journey from Murcia to Almeria suddenly, and riding without delay; I took my horse in the company of virtuous and honest people in the year 595 (1198)."

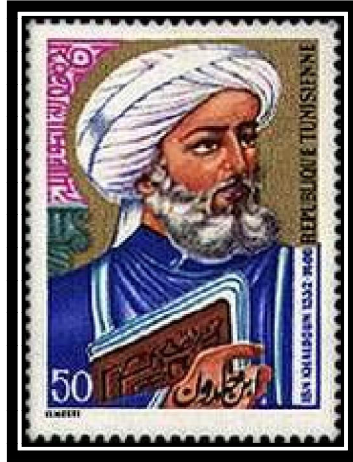
Joel Kraemer⁶⁶ defends the notion of "the Sufi school of Murcia" but we have to understand that the town Murcia and the Ricote Valley are two separate places and Ibn

⁶⁵ **SHARIF, Muhammad Yasir** (1990) *Falsafat Al-Tasawwuf Al-Sab'ini*. Damascus: Manshurat Wizarat Al-Thaqafa, pp. 114-115 and 141-144.

⁶⁶ **KRAEMER, Joel** (1992) *The Andalusian Mystic Ibn Hud and the Conversion of the Jews*. In: *Israel Oriental Studies XII*, pp. 59-74 In p. 68, note 34.

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Sab'in was a native of the Ricote Valley. So it is better to speak about the Region of Murcia or Province of Murcia⁶⁷. The region or province of Murcia include: Murcia, Lorca and the Ricote Valley.



Tunisian postage stamp of Ibn Khaldun

The importance of the sufis Ibn Sa'bin and Ibn Arabi we observe in the work of Ibn Khaldun. Ibn Khaldun had a critical attitude towards contemporary Sufi movements and summarized them in the following fatwa⁶⁸:

The path of the so-called Sufis [murasawwifa] comprises two paths. The first is the path of the Sunna, the path of their forefathers [salaf], according to the Book and Sunna, imitating

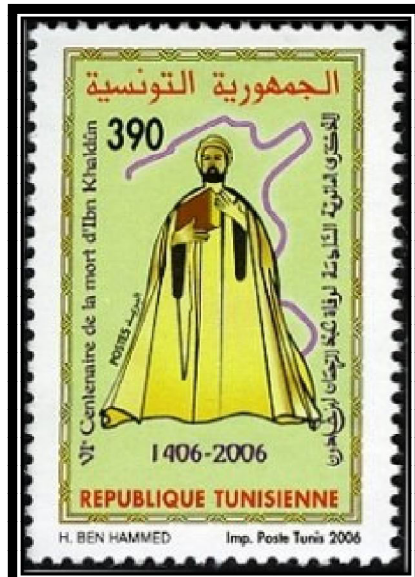
⁶⁷ The same name of Murcia for a town and province often leads to confusion.

⁶⁸ Reprinted at the end of M. Al-Tanji's edition of the *Shifa' Al-Sa'il fi Tahdhib Al-Masa'il*, (Istanbul, 1958), pp. 110-11. Cited by **MORRIS, James Winston** (2009) An Arab Machiavelli? Rhetoric, Philosophy ad Politics in Ibn Khaldun's Critique of Sufism. In: Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review 8, pp. 242-291.

their righteous forefathers among the Companions [of the Prophet] and the Followers.

The second path, which is contaminated by [heretical] innovations, is the way of a group among the recent thinkers [muta'akhhirun] who make the first path a means to the removal [kashf] of the veil of sensation because that is one of its results. Now among these self- styled Sufis are Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Sab'in, Ibn Barrajan, and their followers among those who traveled their way and worshipped according to their [heretical] sect [nihla]...

Hence, in order to understand the events that surrounded the sufi movement, one should bear in mind that the power structure in Al-Andalus was not only linked to the Almoravid elite of governors and the military, but also to the power of the judiciary concentrated around local lineages with the endorsement of religious authority.



Ibn Khaldun, postal stamp of Tunis 2006

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Jose Bellver proposes “that the events surrounding Ibn Barrajan were a result of religious -not political- tensions brought about by the emergence of a class of learned Sufis whose increasing numbers of disciples were seen as a threat by the judiciary. With the spiritual and religious authority he had acquired, Ibn Barrajan came to personify in the Islamic West of his day an equivalent role to that of Al-Ghazali in the Islamic East. These tensions resulted in Ibn Barrajan's being tried for and found guilty.” Whatever the final results will be of Jose Bellver's research one cannot forget the influence of the Sufis on political matters⁶⁹:

The starting signal for the general uprising in Al-Andalus against the remnants of Almoravid power begins in the Algarve with the rebellion of the Ahmad Ibn Qasi leading the Muridun, (a politically oriented Sufi movement, the same Ibn Khaldun specifically singles out and derides as a failed example, so very capable of ample and bloody disruption but, structurally, completely inadequate as a tool for attaining the desired hold onto power). The effects of Ibn Qasi's propagandising come to a climax with the taking by his partisans of Mertola in Safar 539H. Proclaiming himself, it seems without ever blushing, both Imam and Mahdi. His claim is quickly and opportunistically supported, among others, by Sidray b. Wazir of Evora and Beja (Vives 1911-1912) and by Muhammad b. Mundir of Silves. This support would prove to be most fleeting. While in Cordoba, during Ramadan, its qadi Hamdin Ibn Muhammad displaces the last Almoravids during an eleven-month period. This last, being a relatively long reign for the times, albeit interrupted briefly, during ten days, by the occupation of Cordoba by Ahmad Ibn Hud, the otherwise named Saif al Dawla in the chronicles. To chose just a few more examples, among the many others, in this same year Muhammad Ibn Malhan takes Guadix, while 'Ali Ibn Adha briefly takes Granada. Soon after a large Almohade army

⁶⁹ **IBRAHIM, Tawfiq** (2005) A dinar of 'Ali Ibn 'Ubaid struck in Murcia in the year 542H. In: XIII Congreso Internacional de Numismática, Madrid 2003, Actas II, Madrid, pp. 1593-1597.

disembarks and quickly takes Algeciras, Tarifa and Jerez, all the while the last remnants of Almoravid power, under the leadership of Yahya Ibn Ghaniya, continue to fight, stubbornly and many times valiantly, a losing battle against the most impossible odds.

2. Ibn Arabí

The famous Ibn 'Arabi of Murcia that time nurtured the doctrine of *wahdat Al-wujud*. Maybe we have before us the spiritual chain of transmission (*isnaid*) – Ibn 'Arabi > Ibn Sab'in > Ibn Hud. Although historians are saying the same for Ibn Sab'in, there are other researchers that state that *Al-wahda Al-mutlaqa* (absolute oneness) was his doctrin⁷⁰.

Ibn Arabi was born in Murcia on 25 July 1165AD. His father, 'Ali Ibn Muḥammad, served in the Army of Ibn Mardanish. When Ibn Mardanish died in 1172 AD, 'Ali Ibn Muḥammad swiftly shifted his allegiance to the Almohad Sultan, Abu Ya'qub Yusuf I, and became one of his military advisers. His family then relocated from Murcia to Seville. His mother came from a wealthy Berber family with strong ties to northern Africa. Ibn 'Arabi's intellectual training began in Seville in 578 AH. Most of his teachers were the clergy of the Almohad era and some of them held the official posts of Qadi or Khatib.

Ibn Arabi belonged to the Zahirite School of law and was a follower of Ibn Hazm. He was personally acquainted with Averroes and it is said that he had attended his funeral.

His spiritual mentor in Fes was Mohammed Ibn Qasim Al-Tamimi. In the year 597 AH/1200 AD, he was in

⁷⁰ **GEOFFROY, Eric** (1998) L'Apophatisme chez les mystiques de l'islam, (religioperennis.org), pp. 1-12. In p. 8.

DUGGAN, T. Mikail P. (2014) Veil of light. In: Mediterranean Journal of Humanities, IX/1, pp. 129-157. In p. 137.

Morocco and took his final leave from his master Yusuf Al-Kumi, who was living in the village of Salé at that time. Ibn Arabi undertook Hajj in 598 AH. He lived in Mecca for three years. It was in Mecca that he started writing the very best of his works *Al-Futuḥat Al-Makkiyya*. After spending time in Mecca, he travelled throughout Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Turkey.



Ibn Arabi's cenotaph in the glass case in his tomb (Qubba) in the district of Al-Salihiya on the northern edge of Damascus at the foot of Jabal Qasiyun. (Nerrudin, CC BY 2.5)

The year 600 AH witnessed a meeting between Ibn Arabi and Shaykh Majduddin Ishaq Ibn Yusuf, a native of Malatya and a man of great standing at the Seljuk court. This time Ibn 'Arabi was travelling north; first they visited Medina and in 601 AH they entered Baghdad. This visit, among other benefits, offered him a chance to meet the direct disciples of Shaykh 'Abd Al-Qadir Jilani. Ibn Arabi stayed there only for 12 days because he wanted to visit Mosul to see his friend 'Ali Ibn 'Abdallah Ibn Jami', a disciple of Qaḍib Al-Ban.

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There he spent the month of Ramaḍan and composed *Tanazzulat Al-Mawṣiliyya*, *Kitab Al-Jalal wa'l-Jamal* and *Kunh ma la Budda lil-MuridMinhu*. In the year 602 AH he visited Jerusalem, Mecca and Egypt. It was his first time that he passed through Syria, visiting Aleppo and Damascus. Later in 604 AH he returned to Mecca where he continued to study and write, spending his time with his friend Abu Shuja bin Rustem and family, including the beautiful Nizam. The next 4 to 5 years of Ibn 'Arabi's life were spent in these lands and he also kept travelling and holding the reading sessions of his works in his own presence. In 629 AH the first draft of *Al-Futuḥat Al-Makkiyya* was completed. Hundreds of manuscripts of this work exist in various libraries of the world, the most important of them being the manuscript of Konya, written by its author.

Three years later in 632 AH, on the first of Muḥarram, Ibn 'Arabi embarked on a second draft of the *Futuḥat*; this he explained, included a number of additions and a number of deletions as compared with the previous draft. This revision completed in the year 636 (Addas 286). After completion of this 2nd draft, he started teaching it to his disciples. Hundreds of his hearings or public readings occurred between the year 633 AH and 638 AH. On 22 Rabi' Al-Thani 638 AH at the age of seventy-five, Ibn 'Arabi died in Damascus».

Ibn Arabi is renowned by some practitioners of Sufism as "the greatest master" and also as a genuine saint. He went by the names Al-Shaykh Al-Akbar, Muḥyiddin Ibn Arabi, and was also later nicknamed the Great Shaykh.

For many years, the historians followed part of the biography of Ibn Arabi as given by Al-Qari Al-Bagdadi.

His monograph, the *Durr Al-tamin fī manaqib Al-Sayh Muhyi l-Din* was used for that purpose⁷¹.

[Ibn Al-‘Arabi] had been one of the sons of the rulers, notables and chiefs of that time. His father was the minister (*wazir*) of Séville’s overlord, the Sultan of the West [*sci.*, the Almohad caliph].

Now, a ruler who was one of his father’s associates [once] invited him, along with a group of [other] sons of rulers, to a banquet. When the Master, Muhyi l-Din [Ibn Al-‘Arabi] (May God be pleased with him!) and the whole gathering were present and they had taken their fill of the food, the cups of wine (*aqdah Al-rah*) began going the rounds among them, until it came to the turn of [Ibn Al- ‘Arabi, who] took the cup in his hand, intending to drink from it. But he heard [a voice] saying: “O Muhammad, not for this were you created!” So he cast the cup aside and went out in a state of utter perplexity.

When he arrived at the entrance of his home he described by the gate a herds-man of the minister’s [*sci.*, his father’s] flocks, [covered] with the dust in which he spent every day. [Ibn Al-‘Arabi] then accompanied him to the outskirts of the city, where he took [the shepherd’s dirty] clothes and put them on, and gave him his own clothing. [Thereafter] he wandered around (*saha*) until he arrived after some time at a cemetery (*gabbana*) situated by a running stream, and he resolved to sojourn in the cemetery. For in its midst he found a tomb (*qabr*) which had caved in and fallen to ruins, [so that] it resembled a small grotto (*Al-magara Al-sagira*). He then entered [this grotto] and occupied himself with the Invocation [of God] (*Al-dikr*), never even emerging [thence] except at the time of prayer.

The Master [Ibn Al-Arabi] has said: “I stayed in that cemetery for four days; and I came out thereafter with all of this knowledge [that I now possess].”

⁷¹ **ELMORE, Gerald** (1998) New Evidence on the Conversion of Ibn Al-Arabi to Sufism. In: *Arabica*, T. 45, Fasc. 1, pp. 50-72. In pp. 53-54.

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Happily, in 1997, Gerard Elmore⁷² gave a new biography of Ibn Al-'Arabi basing himself on Fuat Sezgin's publication of the facsimil edition of a manuscript of the Qala'id Al-juman fi fara'id shu'ara hadha 'l-zaman. Hereunder follows the partial description of the biography as reflected by Elmore:

Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Ahmad [Ibn] Al-'Arabi, Abu 'Abd Allah, the Gnostic Master [surnamed] Al-Hatimi Al-Ta'i, a descendant of 'Abd Allah, son of Hatim Al-Ta'i. He was born in the town of Murcia in the time of the [independent] Commander. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. sa'd Ibn Mardanish, in the year 560/1165 A.D.; and he died on the 22nd day of Rabi' Al-Akhar in Damascus, and was buried at Jabal Quasiyun i the tomb of the Qadi, Zaki Al-Din, in [638 Nov. 10, 1240]. He studied traditions with Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Ubayd Allah Al-Hajri. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Sa'id Ibn Zarqun, Abu -l- Husayn Yahya b. Al-Sa'igh Al-Sabu, Muhammad b. Qasim b. 'Abd Al-Karim Al-Fasi, and a number of other besides them.

His family were soldiers (*ajnad*) in the service of those who controlled the country (*Al-mustawlin 'ala -l-bilad*), and he [himself] remained for some time [in his youth] a soldier (*jundi*). Then, in the year 580 [1184], he dropped out of the army. He told me, saying *verbatim*:

"The reason for my withdrawal from and repudiation of the army (*intiqali 'an Al-jundiyyah wa-nabdhi laha*), as well as my following this path [of Sufism] and my propensity toward it (*suluki hadhihi 'l-tariqah wa- mayli ilayha*), was as follows]: When I went out in the company of my Lord (*makhdumi*), the [Almohad] Prince, Abu Bakr Yusuf b. 'Ad Al-Mu'min b. 'Ali, to the great mosque in Córdoba, and I saw [the Prince] bowing and prostrating and humbly abasing himself in supplication to God (To Him belong Might and Majesty!), an idea (*khajir*) stirred in me [so that] I said to myself: 'If this, the ruler of the land, is so humbly submissive and does this before God (Be He exalted! To Him belong Might and Majesty!], then this world is

⁷² **ELMORE, Gerard** (1997) New Evidence on the Early Life of Ibn Al-'Arabi. In: Journal of the American Oriental Society, 117, 2, pp. 347-439.

worth nothing.' So I left him on that very day, and never saw him again. Thereafter, I followed this path."

The precise year in which Ibn Al-Arabi entered⁷³ on the Sufi path is 580/1184-85. In that year, he would have been nineteen or twenty years old. Abu Gafar Al-Uryani of Seville was his first teacher.

He removed to Seville which he made his home for nearly thirty years. There and also at Ceuta he studied Hadith and Fikh. He had visited Tunis in 590 (1194), and in 598 (1201-2) he set out for the East, from which he did not return. In the same year (598), he reached Mecca: in 601 he spent twelve days in Baghdad, to which he returned in 608 (1211-2), and he was back in Mecca in 611 (1214-5). Here he stayed for some months, but the beginning of the following year finds him in Aleppo. He visited also Mosul and Asia Minor⁷⁴.

Asin Palacios and Salverda di Grave have pointed out that Dante in the *Divina Comedia* derived from Ibn Arabi the great design of Hell and Paradise and also the image of the beautified young woman as guide to the Divine.

⁷³ See *Al-Futuhat al-makkiya* (Cairo: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Arabiya Al-Kubra, 1911), vol. II, p. 425.

⁷⁴ **WEIR, T.H.** (1913-1936) *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. First Edition.

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Ibn Arabi

3. Abubéquer Mohámed Benahmed ‘el Ricotí el Mursí.

Mohammad Ibn Ahmad El-Riquti Al-Mursi (El Ricotí 1230? – 1295?), also called Abu-Bakr was a celebrity born in Ricote (Murcia) who flourished in the second half of the thirteenth century and VII of the Hegira. He was noted for his formidable knowledge in ancient arts: Logic, Geometry, Mathematics, Medicine and Music and his eloquent oratory. He was a philosopher and an expert physician, a sign of God in the knowledge of different languages. He was a person of good knowledge and of pride.

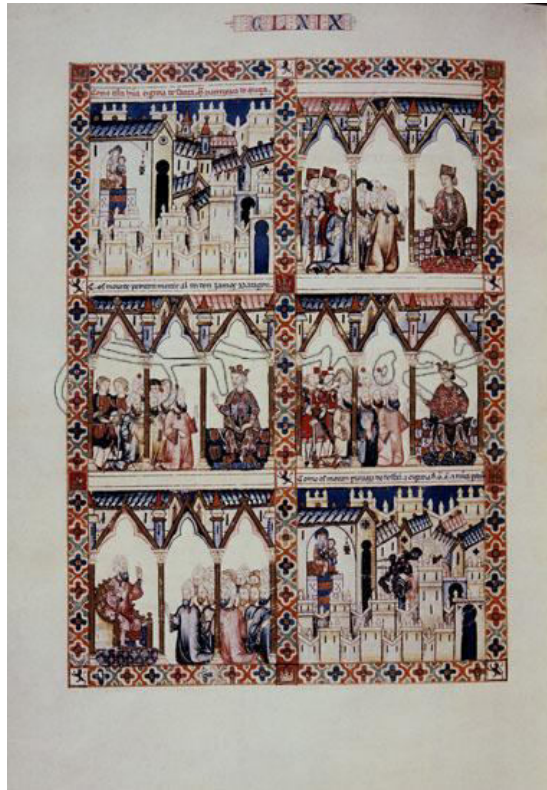
The despot of Rome⁷⁵, who captured Murcia recognized his worth, built him a school, around the year 668/1268. Alfonso the Wise knew that el Ricotí was a prodigy for his vast and profound knowledge and dominated all Arab sciences and the so-called ancient ones (Mathematics, Medicine, Music, Logic and other branches of Philosophy). Consequently, King Alfonso instructed him the teaching in this school, around the year 668/1269.

His disciples were Moors, Jews and Christians. Students adored their teacher, who had the unique ability of being able to explain to everyone in the language of the student.

⁷⁵ I thank Prof. Areeg A. Ibrahim of the Harvard University for facilitating me in 2014 the complete translation from Arabic of the biography of Mohammed Ahmed El-Riquti Al-Mursi is taken from a book by Lissan Al-Din Ben Al-Khateeb entitled AL-IHATA FI AKHBAR GHERNATA, [THE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ABOUT GRANADA].

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King Alfonso treated him lavishly, trying to attract him with salaries, honors and awards, in the hope of converting him some day to Christianity. Ricotí's fame came to Granada, and the second Masrid Sultan (viz. Mohammad II Al-Faqih, reigned 671/1272-701/1302)⁷⁶ invited him to be move the capital of the kingdom to teach the people of his law, and so Ricotí decided to leave the service of Alfonso X.



Cantiga 169

⁷⁶ Prof. Ibrahim speaks in his note about Mohammed I, the Nasrid king of Granada.

Once in Granada, the same Sultan, became his disciple and gave him a beautiful house with garden that Ricotí converted in a school, where he taught medicine, Mathematics and other sciences. He used to ride to the Sultan's residence on a lanky mule; a friendly man, well dressed, nobly walking, until he died there [in Granada], God have mercy upon him.

There is only one good source of information about Muhammad Al-Riquti, the Muslim chronicler Ibn Al-Khatib (713/1313-776/1375) wrote about him as follows:

Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Al-Riquti Al-Mursi He was outstandingly eminent in his knowledge of the ancient arts: logic, mathematics, arithmetic, music and medicine. He was a philosopher and an expert physician, a sign of God in the knowledge of languages. He taught the nations in their own languages [my italics] the arts they wished to learn The Tyrant-King of the Christians knew (the rank) to which he was entitled (because of his scholarship), after he had conquered Murcia. Thus he built for him a *madrassa* in which he could teach the Muslims, Christians and Jews and (where) he continued to be held in esteem by him (i.e. the King)⁷⁷.

With regard to the influence of Sufism on Christianity, claims have been made for a Sufi impact upon the Catalan theologian and philosopher Ramón Lull (1232-1316). He himself says that he wrote his *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* (Libre d'amíc e amat) in the manner of the Sufis.

If believing Julian Ribera then Ricotí also had to do with music and maybe he was a musician who adapted the

⁷⁷ Ibn Al-Khatib, *Al-Ihata fi akhbar Gharnata*, vol. 3, pp. 67-8. Wieger quotes the translation of Van Koningsveld, "Andalusian-Arabic Manuscripts", pp. 81. See: **WIEGER, Gerard Albert** (1994) *Islamic Literatur in Spanish and Aljamiado*. Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), *His Antecedent & Successors*, p. 52.

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Cantigas. This idea is quite well possible if we take into account that the cantiga 169 of the codex of the El Escorial, refers to the Cantiga de la Arrixaca in Murcia while Cantiga 239 treats with a neighbour of Murcia. The Cantigas of the Castilian king that refers to Murcia are mainly four.



¿Al-Riquti?, perhaps the musician who adapted the *Cantigas*, and
a Christian, each playing an instrument of the lute type.
Cantigas 125

The Arrixaca (169), dedicated to the first patroness of the city of Murcia and that is reproduced here. Number 239 of the manuscript of the “El Escorial”, where Murcia shows a known miracle common to many other European collections. Number 299, also in the “El Escorial”,

recounts that a miracle happened to Knight of St. Mary of the Star. Number 339 of the same collection, which includes a maritime miracle of the Virgin, prevents shipwreck during coasting from Cartagena to Alicante. In the Arab chronicles we find that Alfonso the Wise was on intimate terms with a certain Moslem, trained in musical matters, and named Abu Bekr, of Ricote (Province of Murcia). Alfonso honored this musician to the extent of founding a college in Murcia, where he might teach his especial subjects to Christians, Jews, and Moslems. The friendship must have been quite intimate, for the King went so far as to hope to be able to convert this Moor to Christianity, which the latter resisted.



Cantigas 169

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This Moslem might have adapted some Arab melodies to the Cantigas, but, as he is better known as a philosopher and Scholar on questions of morals and theology, he might easily have been more of a musical theorist than performer, and not the professional indicated by the Cantigas. But the King himself has made us suspect that he wished to leave a reminiscence of this artist (at least through the interposition of the miniaturist of the Cantigas). For in the Escorial manuscript, J.b.2, there are paintings of many musicians playing on their instruments.

Some of their heads are merely types, with no intention of portraiture. There are pairs of musicians who are both alike, the two flutists, for example, and so forth. But others show features so singular and strongly marked that the intention of representing contemporaries is evident. (See illustrations.) Among them all, the portrait of a Moorish musician playing on a stringed instrument stands out. Near him is a Christian, who is looking at him with his mouth wide open as if he were singing while the other accompanied him. For characterizing the Moors, they used the infantile scheme of painting them black, as if they came from Guinea. If, by chance, they painted them white, they put them into turbans and gave them rounded beards, and sometimes, for double assurance, they did all these things. This leads one to the inference that the artists used abstract types on such occasions. The same is true in the portrayal of a Jew, for he appears with a robe down to his heels, a pointed wig, and clogs on his feet, but above all with a pronouncedly aquiline nose, although he too is a type and not an individual. - But the Moor painted in the vignette of leaf 125 of the Escorial manuscript, J.b.2, wears no turban⁷⁸, nor is he a black (negro); he is of the

⁷⁸ In the Levant, the people had never adopted the apparel, such as turbans, worn by Muslims in other countries. Woolen caps were worn

swarthy but yellowish type so often seen in Andalusia nowadays. His face is painted larger than the rest, and with a different type of brush stroke from those used on the other musicians. The Christian who is singing in front of the Moor is at the reader's right hand, and the Moor is at his left, so that he, the Moor, would be actually at the Christian's right in the picture.



The Arabist, Prof. Julián Ribera Tarragó
www.bibliotecaspublicas.es/carcaixent/seccont_13023.htm

instead of turbans, and all Andalusians donned a kind of short, dark cloak – sometimes hooded – called the *taylasan* (which is probably the original of our academic hood). In the western provinces, in Cordoba and Seville, the upper and learned classes invariably wore turbans, but the military and commoners even there did not. Cited by: **ELMORE, Gerard** (2000) Poised Expectancy: Ibn Al-‘Arabi’s Roots in “Sharq Al-Andalus”. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 90, pp. 51-56. In p. 52.

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In all of the miniatures the principal musician is thus placed. The rank of the musicians is also shown, in that those on the reader's left wear gilded boots, while those at his right do not. Thus the Moor is in the position of honor, rather than the Christian. If he is not decked in gilded boots, it is because Moorish courtesy, then as now, compelled him to put aside his shoes on entering a house, so he is unshod. He is playing a superb stringed instrument and has been served with wine, the inseparable adjunct, as we know, of Moorish music. So might not this Moor, who seems to have nothing to do with religious compositions and yet is receiving such marked attention, be the artist who adapted the music of the *Cantigas* for Alfonso? That he should have been painted there, the only one of his religion among so many Christian musicians may be in recognition of this fact. His name at the moment remains a mystery. There are documents relating to the Moorish orchestra at the court of Sancho IV, with the lists of the Moriscos of whom it was composed, including their Arabic names, but so far no list has been found of the musicians of Sancho's father, Alfonso X. Hitherto stops the narration of Julian Ribera⁷⁹, Professor of Arabo-Spanish literature in the University of Madrid.

With regards to Abu Bekr, of Ricote, he is known as Abubéquer Mohámed Benahmed 'el Ricotí el Mursí. On the other hand, the Swiss Arnold Steiger also wrote about the Arrixaca as follows⁸⁰:

⁷⁹ **RIBERA Y TARRAGO, Julián** (1929) *Music in ancient Arabia and Spain*, London, Oxford, pp. 224-225.

⁸⁰ **STEIGER, Arnald** (1958) *Toponimia árabe en Murcia*. In: *Revista Murgetana*, Nº 11, pp. 9-27. In pp. 25-26.

«Our Virgin of Arrixaca in the Church of Saint Andrew because it was sung by Alfonso X the Wise in one of his beautiful Cantigas (169):

This is how Santa Maria kept a church that is in the Arrixaca of Murcia that the Moors wanted to destroy and could not do so.»

D'ua eigrei'antiga, De que sempr'acordar S'yan, que ali fora Da Reynna sen par Dentro na arreixaca Et yan y orar Genoeses, pisaos Et outros de Cezilla	Of an old church Of which one always remembers Of the Queen Within the Arriaxa Where will pray Genoese, And others from Seville
---	--

According to Steiger, this Cantiga is exceedingly instructive. It is a historical source attesting that by saying “the Arrixaca Italian merchants should have a factory already in the first years of the Reconquest, and there it would have its Sanctuary and Genoese, Pisans and Sicilians worship.”

However, the name of this community is Arabic. Steiger thinks that the author Juan Bernal Segura is right with reference to the *Topónimos árabes de la Provincia de Murcia*. He identifies the term with the root rashad ‘launch’. In essence, rishaqa is ‘elegance’, ‘what has elegant height, slenderness’; it is, therefore, the elegant ‘place’. Moreover, the fact is that the Arabs gave this name to the area, and the Virgin was called “the Virgin of the neighborhood of Rishaqa.’

4. Ibn Sab'in of the Ricote Valley

Ibn Sab'in of the Ricote Valley⁸¹ was one of the most important thinkers of medieval Arabic philosophy and one of the leading representatives of Andalusian mysticism. He occupied a prominent place in the cultural panorama of both Islam and Christianity around the 13th century⁸².

Lately, there is a growing interest in knowing more about this radical thinking Sufi who lived in the 8th century. Proof of this is that is the award-winning novelist Bensalem Himmich wrote a novel about Ibn Sab'in. This novel was translated from Arabic to English by Roger Allen⁸³.

Dr. Bensalem Himmich has published 26 books, both literary and scientific, in Arabic and French. As a liberal philosopher, Himmich is concerned with matters including ideological education in Islam. He advocates the division of church and state and deals with the conflicts that Morocco faces today.

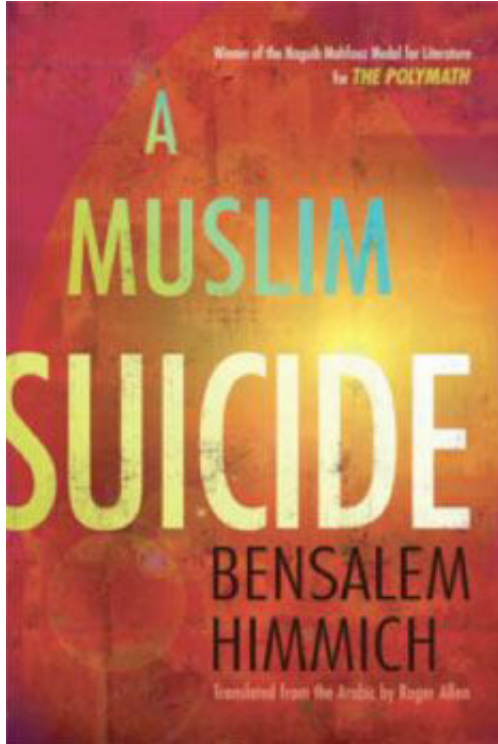
Bensalem Himmich, a professor of philosophy at Muhammad V University in Rabat and Morocco's minister of culture since 2009, has successfully re-created not only the social and political conditions of Ibn Sab'in's times in this novel but also the religious and intellectual

⁸¹ **KINGTON, T.L.** (1862) History of Frederick the Second, London. Vol. I, pp. 436-438.

⁸² **ARVIDE CAMBRA, Luisa María** (2013) Ibn Sab'in and The Sicilian Questions. In: International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vol. 5, Nº 2, pp. 225-228.

⁸³ **HIMMICH, Bensalem** (2011) A Muslim Suicide. Syracuse University Press. New York.

debates that accompanied them. Muslims maintaining a literalist view of Islamic orthodoxy were against those who, like Ibn Sab'in, taught Sufi mysticism and philosophy.



Political authorities sided with the literalist theologians and jurists for expedient reasons and pursued their opponents. Because of this, Ibn Sab'in was often on the run and was severely critical of Muslim rulers; but wherever he went in his escape, which eventually led to Mecca, he had admirers and disciples.

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Dr. Bensalem Himmich won the prize of the critics (1990) for his novel *le fou du pouvoir*, a book elected by the Arab Union of Writers as one of the hundred best books of the 20th century.

He won the Charika prize of the Arab Culture of Jury composed of UNESCO and well-known literary personalities.



Bensalem Himmich with his medal
(c) Al-Ahram Weekly On-line⁸⁴

Dr. Ben Salem Himmich won the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature for his book *Al-'Allamah* (2001; *The Polymath*, a book about the great Arab writer Ibn Khaldoun). The award was established in 1996 and awarded for the best contemporary novel published in

⁸⁴ Issue N° 617, 19-25 December 2002, Cairo.

Arabic. The winning work is translated into English and published in Cairo, London, and New York⁸⁵.



Bensalem Himmich's book about Ibn Sab'in

Dr. Himmich has been a scholar of Ibn Khaldun for many years, having relied on his *Tarikh* (History) and *Muqaddima* (Prolegomena) while writing a dissertation on the late mediaeval period in the Maghrib. This earned him a doctoral degree in philosophy from the Sorbonne in 1986.

⁸⁵ *Al-Ahram* 19 - 25 December 2002, Issue No. 617, "Ibn Khaldun resurrected, Amina Elbendary attends the Mahfouz Award Ceremony at AUC

Ibn Sab'in born in the Valle de Ricote or in Ricote?

'Abd Al-Haqq b. Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Nasr Al-'Akki Al-Mursi Abu Muhammad Qutb Al-Din Sab'in⁸⁶ (1217-1270), was a Murcian Mussulman, surnamed Kotbeddin (pole star of the faith). He was an author on philosophical subjects at the early age of fifteen, and afterwards founded a sect, to which he gave his name. He probably went to Ceuta in 1243 when he was 27 years old.

Ibn Sab'in was born into a prominent Murcian family around 1217 in Ricote⁸⁷, a town bordering the Segura River, north-west of Murcia. Other historians state Valle

⁸⁶ Lator mentions: Muhyi Al-din Abu Muhammad Abd Al-Haqq b. Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Nasr b. Muhammad Al-Mursi Al-Riquti Al-Isbili Al-Sufi Qutb Al-din b. Al-Dara b. Sab'in. Cfr.: **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'tarif. In: Al-Andalus, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 373.

LISAN AL DIN IBN AL KHATIB (1977) Al-Ihata fi Akhbar Gharnatah, Vol. 4, p. 31, Maktaba Al-Khaniji. Cairo.

⁸⁷ **SPALLINO, Patrizia** (2002) Ibn Sab'in. Le questioni siciliane. Federico II e l'universo filosofico. Palermo, p. 33. Cited by:

AKASOY, Anna Ayse (2006) Die Sizilianischen Fragen des Ibn Sab'in Philosophie und Mystik in der späten Almohadenzeit. Ph.D. Dissertation. Philosophie im Fachbereich Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften der Johan-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, p. 4.

SPALLINO, Patrizia (1994) Nota sulla nisbah di Ibn Sab'in. In: Alifbà 16, pp. 83-94.

SPALLINO, Patrizia (1996) Al-Masa'il Al-siqilliyya. Ann Ist Orient Napoli, 56: pp. 52-62.

SPALLINO, Patrizia (1997) Il problema del fine della metafisica nelle Questioni Siciliane di Ibn Sab'in. In: La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica medievale. Forme e modi di trasmissione, a cura di Valvo A. Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria, pp. 211-220.

de Ricote a translation for Wadi Riqut⁸⁸. The region of Valle de Ricote covered in those times the places of Fauaran (today: Abarán), Al-Darrax, Negra, Oxos (Today Ojós) Ricote, Oleya (today Ulea) and Asnete (today Villanueva de Segura).

Wadi Riqut

It is interesting to see the observations of Knysh⁸⁹, who refers to the anonymous “people of wadi Riqut” when he compares the doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi with others:

Nevertheless, the doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers is, in Ibn Al-Khatib’s view, closer to Islam than that of absolute unity, espoused by Abu ‘Abdallah Al-Shudhi, Ibn Dahhaq (d. 611/1214), Ibn Sab’in (d. 669/1270), Al-Shushtari (d. 668/1269), Ibn Mutarrif Al-Judhami Al-A’ama, the blind (d. 688/1289), and the anonymous “people of wadi Riqut”.



Ibn Sab'in of Anna Ayse Akasoy (German book)

⁸⁸ **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'arif. En: Al-Andalus, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 379.

⁸⁹ **KNYSH, Alexander** (1999) Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam. State University of New York, p. 183.

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Pierre Guichard also states that the inhabitants of *wadi Riqut* adhered to an extremist mystical doctrine known as *Wahda mutlaqa*. In the origins of the Hudí revolt, one finds at the same time certain religious and violent features, suggesting a popular context, perhaps, mysticism. The prophets had announced the appearance of Ibn Hud, who presented himself as a providential personage.

He said: «I am – he says to his first companions, the Time Lord, and I will be who will again pronounce juba on behalf of the Abbasids⁹⁰.»

Yousef Alexander Casewit⁹¹ gives more information about the biography of Ibn Sab'in stating that «Ibn Sab'in traces his lineage to the Prophet Mohammad through 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib. He also refers to the Ricote Valley as followers of Hermeticism:

Muslim Hermetists: Among the Sufi Hermetists we find Abu 'Abdallah Al-Shudhi of Seville, Ibn Mutarrif the Blind of Murcia, Muhammad Ibn Ahla of Lorca and Al-Hajj Yasin Al-Maghribi. In *La Voie et la Loi*, (pp. 279-80) Ibn Khaldun⁹²

⁹⁰ **GUICHARD, Pierre** (2001) *Al-Andalus frente a la conquista cristiana: los musulmanes de Valencia*. Biblioteca Nueva. Universidad de València, p. 169.

⁹¹ **CASEWIT, Yousef Alexander** (2008) *The Objective of Metaphysics in Ibn Sab'in's Answers to the Sicilian Questions*. In: *Iqbal Review* (Pakistan), Vol. 49, N° 2, pp. 1-6.

LATOR, Stefan (1942) *Die Logik des Ibn Sab'in aus Murcia*. Doctoral thesis, University of Munich. Printed in Rome.

⁹² **IBN KHALDUN** (1991) *La Voie et la Loi: ou, Le Maître et le juriste*. Sindbad, pp. 279-280.

See also: **URVOY, Dominique** (1972) *Une étude sociologique des mouvements religieux dans l'Espagne musulmane de la chute du califat au milieu du XIIIe siècle*. In: *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*. Tome 8, pp. 223-293. There is a nice development scheme of the Sufis on p. 79.

notes that “a large group of people from eastern Spain and the Ricote valley” were followers of Hermeticism.

Ibn Sab'in's writing style is quite obscure and mystical⁹³ and the Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy describes his language the best⁹⁴:

The language is full of expressions that are not easy to translate. Ibn Sab'in's passion for science and white magic prompted him to use extremely peculiar sentences. Often the logic of his arguments is interrupted by Sufi concepts that were not always understood by his contemporaries. In order to fully understand the complexity of Ibn Sab'in's writings, the reader is forced to acquire information not only from the classical texts of Islamic culture, but also from the fundamental texts of Jewish, Christian, Persian, and Hellenic thought. On the one hand, the difficulties in understanding Ibn Sab'in style as well as the several accusations of heresies explain the reason why Ibn Sab'in's works were not very popular among scholars. On the other hand, Ibn Sab'in's aim was not to write popular philosophical works, rather the contrary.

There is a link between the wadi riqut, Sufism, and the Hudi dynasty. The proof is an emir named Badr Al-Din Hasan Ibn Hud (633-699 H/ 1236-1300 CE), grandnephew of Ibn Hud Al-Mutawakkil, who was the head of the Sufi sect of Sab'iniyya at Damascus in the second half of the thirteenth century. At that time there were two other Sufis that belonged to the sect of Sab'iniyya. The first one was *shayk* Al-Kashani Al-Fargani (D. 1300) who was a pupil of Sadr Al-Din Al-Qunawi and the second one was the mystic poet 'Afif Al-Din Sulayman Al-Tilimsani (1212-1291), who met Ibn Sab'in in Cairo. The founder of the

⁹³ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1928) Ibn Sab'in et la critique psychologique. In: Mémorial Henri Basset. Nouvelles études nord-africaines et Orientales, Paris, Vol. II, pp. 123-130.

⁹⁴ **LAGERLUND, Henrik** (2011) Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500, Canada, p. 511.

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movement in Damascus was Ibn Sab'in of the wadi Riqut. Pierre Guichard is right with his observation that both Ibn Sab'in as the hudí emir of Damascus seem to come from a specific political-religious context of Murcia and the Murcia region. The core of the movement was probably in the wadi Riqut where the Sufis Riqut could practice their religion unhindered. Taking into account this important link, we have added some details of the Sufi Hasan b. Hud in other pages.



**THE SON OF SEVENTY (1986). Sicilian Questions. Published by
University Corporation for Studies and Publishing.**

What probably all had to do with it was the promised Messiah and Mahdi⁹⁵, awaited by Muslims. In this respect the Sufi doctrine of Ibn Sab'in is forged. Among his objectives was the social reform of the *umma*, which should be headed by an *imam* of exemplary justice. In this way, the community could become an ideal city; that is, according to God through his well directed leader or *Mahdi*⁹⁶.

Ibn Sab'in received a thorough Andalusian education in Murcia, acquiring extensive knowledge of Arabic, the Islamic sciences, Greek philosophy⁹⁷, mathematics, astronomy, the natural sciences, literature, and Christian and Jewish theology.

He was reported to be an outstanding calligrapher and a man of great virtue and patience, enduring hardship and

⁹⁵ **AZIZ AL-AZMEH** (2003) *Ibn Khaldun: An Essay in Reinterpretation*. Central European University Press. New York, p. 81.

⁹⁶ **FIERRO BELLO, Maribel** (1999) *Doctrinas y movimientos de tipo mesiánico en Al-Andalus*. In: *Milenarismos y milenaristas en la Europa medieval: IX Semana de Estudios Medievales*, Nájera, 1998. Coord. Por José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte, pp. 159-176. In p. 171. See also:

FIERRO BELLO, Maribel (1994) *Mahdisme et eschatologie dans Al-Andalus*. In: A. Kaddouri. *Madhisme. Crise et changement dans l'histoire du Maroc*. Actes de la table ronde organisée à Marrakech para la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Rabat du 11 au 14 Février 1993. Rabat, pp. 47-69.

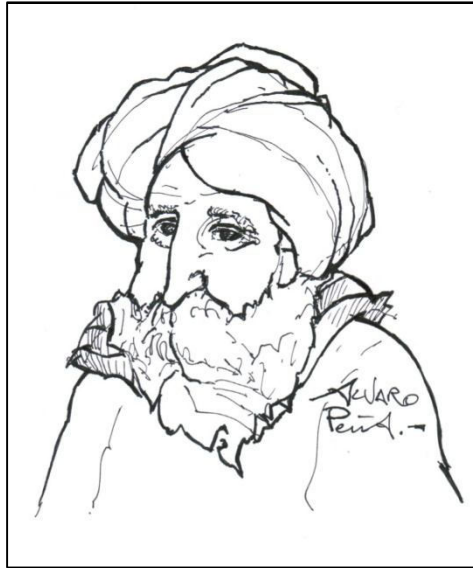
⁹⁷ **BERMAN, Lawrence V.** (1961) *The Political Interpretation of the Maxim: The Purpose of Philosophy is the Imitation of God*. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 15, pp. 53-61. In p. 54.

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR (1973) *The Meaning and Role of "Philosophy" in Islam*. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 37, pp. 57-80. In p. 78.

BADAWI, Abdurrahman (1956) *L'Humanisme dans la Pensée arabe*. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 6, pp. 67-100. In p. 99.

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having deep knowledge of prophetic traditions⁹⁸. One of his biographers, Ibn Al Khaṭīb, relates that as a young man, he was “royally arrayed, selfassured, and upright⁹⁹.” His deep knowledge of medicine and alchemy was highly respected as well, and he even treated a head injury of Abu Numay Ibn Abi Sa'id, the Sharif of Mecca (r. 1254-1301).



Ibn Sab'in (Álvaro Peña)

As stated before, the philosopher Ibn Sab'in is one of the most important thinkers of medieval Arabic philosophy¹⁰⁰ and, together with Ibn 'Arabi, is one of the

⁹⁸ A small amount of his poetry has survived, and continues to be chanted in Moroccan Zawiyas such as the *Zawiya Siddiqiya* of Tangier.

⁹⁹ *Al-Ihata fi Akhbar Gharnata*, Vol. 4, p. 387.

¹⁰⁰ **GUTAS, Dimitri** (2002) *The study of Arabic Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Essay on the Historiography of Arabic Philosophy*. In: *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 29, N° 1, pp. 5-25.

leading representatives of Andalusian mysticism. He occupies a prominent place around the 13th century cultural panorama of both Islam and Christianity. It should be observed that Ibn Taimiyyah states that Ibn Sab'in and his followers did not distinguish between Islam and other religions like Christianity and Judaism. Followers of any religion could approach them and become their disciples without changing their faith. On the other hand, other Sufis went so far as to say that the philosophers were greater than the prophets. Sufis like Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Sab'in, Al-Qunawi, Tilimsani, etc., followed these heretical views of the Batiniyyah¹⁰¹.



Hermes Trismegistus floor detail in Mosaic as present in the Cathedral of Siena, Italy (1480s).

¹⁰¹ **TAIMIYYAH** (1949) *Kitab Al-Radd 'ala Al-Mantiqiyyin*. Edited by 'Abd Al-Samad Sharaf Al-Din Al-Kutubi. Bombay, pp. 278-283.

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According to some researchers Ibn Sab'in's doctrines are marked by the influence of two main philosophical currents, the peripateticism and the Sufism. Others believe more in the Islamic hermetism of Ibn Sab'in and see in him a Muslim Universalist, a Plotinian mystic, and a devotee of Hermes Trismegistus.

It is through the teachings of the Egyptian Dhu'l Nun Misri (from Akhmim, Upper Egypt, 9th century CE) that important Hermetic influences were introduced in the Islamic Sufi tradition. There is a strong similarity between passages of *Fusus Al-Hikam* (The Bezels of Divine Wisdom) by the Sufi Ibn El-Arabi (12th century CE) and the fifth treatise of Thoth's *Corpus Hermeticum*, as well as evident Hermetic influences on Ibn Al-Arabi's work *Al-Futuhāt Al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Illuminations), the *Epistles Rasa'il of Ikhwan Al-Safa* (10th century CE), the work of the Sufi Ibn Sab'in (13th century CE), and the important influence on *The Philosophy of Illumination* of Shahab Al-Din Al-Suhrawardi, who was executed by the Order of Salah el-Din (12th century CE)¹⁰².

Ibn Sab'in considered Hermes¹⁰³ to be his forebear. The first words after the opening *uṭṭba* of his philosophical summa *Kitāb Budd Al-'arif* are, "I prayed to great God to disclose the wisdom expressed in symbols (*ramazaha*) by the Hermes of the first aeons (*Haramisat ad-duhur Al-awwaliya*)".

¹⁰² **RACHAD MOUNIR SHOUCRI** (2003) *The Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica in Amsterdam: a Rich Collection of Works on the Egyptian Humanistic Tradition*. In Watani International, 23rd February, 2003.

¹⁰³ **BLADEL, Kevin van** (2009) *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science*. Oxford, University Press, pp. 228-229.

Apparently, he was a follower of the Shadhiyyah Order that was characterized by its mixing of philosophy and Sufism. Ibn Sab'in had an extensive knowledge of both traditions. He knew well the early classical Sufis of Baghdad and Khurasan, such as Al-Junayd, Al-Hallaj, and Al-Ghazzali as well as the earlier Andalusian masters such as Ibn Masarra, Ibn Qasi, and Ibn 'Arabi. Angel González Palencia states that his master was Ishaq Bendaac¹⁰⁴. On the other hand, Massignon¹⁰⁵ let us know that Al Shuzi was the master of Ibn Sab'in in mysticism.

Ibn Sab'in refers in two of his works to Ibn Masarra¹⁰⁶. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, is of the opinion that «Ibn Sab'in must be considered, along with Suhrawardi and Ibn 'Arabi, as a master of Islamic spirituality who combined the purification of the soul with the perfection of the intellectual faculties, and as one who created a synthesis between spiritual life and speculative thought, between Sufism and philosophy. As the last great representative of the Maghribi-Andalusian school of Islamic philosophy, Ibn Sab'in embodies that synthesis between the practical spiritual life and intellectual doctrine that one finds in Ibn Masarra, who stands at the origin of this school¹⁰⁷.»

¹⁰⁴ **GONZÁLEZ PALENCIA, Ángel** (1928) *Historia de la literatura árabe-española*. Editorial Labor, Barcelona, p. 240.

¹⁰⁵ **MASSIGNON, M. L.** (1928) Ibn Sab'in et la critique psychologique dans l'histoire de la philosophie musulmane apud *Mémorial Henry Basset II*. Paris, pp. 123-130. In p. 42.

¹⁰⁶ **VAHID BROWN, J.** (2006) *Muhammad b. Masarra Al-Jabali and his Place in Medieval Islamic Intellectual History: Towards a Reappraisal*. Thesis presented to the Division of Philosophy, Religion and Psychology Reed College. (Portland, Oregon, USA), p. 106.

¹⁰⁷ **SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR** (1991) *Islamic Spirituality manifestations*. The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, pp. 427.

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Whatever might be the complete truth, the fact is that the writings of Ibn Sab'in turns him into a very interesting figure for researchers and experts. His major work is entitled *The Sicilian Questions*¹⁰⁸ (Al-Masa'il Al-Siqiliyya, in Arabic) and was defined by Professor Dario Cabanelas¹⁰⁹ as "a symbol in the intellectual relations between the Christian medieval Europe and the Islamic world".

¹⁰⁸ **GRIGNASCHI, Mario** (1955) Ibn Sab'in: Al-Kalamu 'ala-l-masa'ili-ç-çiqiliyyati. Trattato sulle domande siciliane (Domanda II, traduzione e commento). In: Archivio Storico Siciliano, serie III, 7, pp. 7-91.

WYSS, Ulrich (2009) Beispiele waghalsigen Denkens : Frankfurter Wissenschaftler geben neue Reihe zur Philosophie des Mittelalters heraus. 2 Vols. In vol. 2: Die Sizilianischen Fragen ; Arabisch-Deutsch. Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main: Hochschulpublikationen.

KADRI, Alice (2013) El componente árabe en el arte de Sicilia. Las cuestiones sicilianas: primer seminario internacional sobre la Sicilia árabe, 10 juin 2013, Madrid.

ARVIDE CAMBRA, Luisa Maria (2013) Ibn Sab'in and the Sicilian Questions. In: International Review of Social Science and Humanities, Vol. 5, N° 2, pp. 225-228.

¹⁰⁹ **DARÍO CABANELAS, O.F.M.** (1955) Federico II de Sicilia e Ibn Sab'in de Murcia. "Las cuestiones sicilianas". En: Miscelanea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos Universidad de Granada, 1955-IV, pp. 31-64.



Ibn Sab'in of Patrizia Spallino (Italian book)

In 1934, Professor Serefettin Yaltkaya published a translation in Turkish¹¹⁰ and some years later in Arabic¹¹¹. With reference to this matter Al Qarafi (d. 1285) investigated fifty questions. He wrote *Kitab al istibsar fima tudrikuhu'l absar* (The revelation of what the eyes

¹¹⁰ **YALTKAYA, Serefettin** (1934) Sicilya cevapları Ibni Sabinin Sicilya Krali ikinci Frederikin felsefi sorgularına verdigi cevapların tercemesidir, Istanbul.

¹¹¹ **YALTKAYA, Serefettin** (1941) Ibn Sab'in, Al-Kalam 'ala-l-Al-Siqiliyya Masa'il, Bayrut.

YALTKAYA, Serefettin (1943) Ibn Sab'in, Correspondance philosophique avec l'Empereur Frederic II of Hohenstaufen. Arabic text, with Introduction by Henry Corbin, Paris.

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may perceive). Al Qarafi's preparation of this book was initiated by the "five questions" sent by the Emperor of Sicily. He investigates fifty questions, so for further study one may consider his book¹¹².

His full name is Abu Muhammad 'Abd Al-Haqq b. Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Nasr Al-'Akki Al-Mursi Al-Riquti Al-Ishbili Al-Qastallani Al-Sufi Qutb Al-Din. He used the name Ibn O, i.e. Ibn Dara, hence the name Ibn Sab'in with which he is known in the history of Islamic thought¹¹³.

The earthly life of Abu Muhammad 'Abd Al-Haqq Ibn Sab'in, began in Murcia, in the Ricote Valley, where he was born in 614 AH, corresponding to the year 1217 of the Christian era. His family had a good social position, because according to Ibn Al-Jatib and Al-Maqqari, his father Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Nasr, assumed political positions and administrative duties. Among them was the position of Mayor of the town of Murcia¹¹⁴.

¹¹² **WIEDEMANN, E.** (1913) *Optische Studien in Laienkreisen im 13. Jahrhundert in Aegypten*. Jahrbuch für Photographie und Reproduktionstechnik, 27, p. 65. The manuscript studied by Wiedemann contains fifty problems. Cited by **SAYILI, Aydin M.** (1940) Al Qarafi and his explanation of the rainbow. In: *Isis*, Vol. 32, No 1, pp. 16-26. In p. 17.

¹¹³ **AL-MAQQARI** (1967) *Nafh Al-Tib Fi-Ghusn Al-Andalus Al-Ratib Wa-Dhikr Waziriha Lisan Al-Din Ibn Al-Khatib*, Muhammad Muhyi Ad-Din Abd Al-Hamid (ed.), (1967), Bayrut. Cited by: **ARVIDE CAMBRA, Luisa María** (2013) Ibn Sab'in and The Sicilian Questions. In: *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, Vol. 5, N° 2, pp. 225-228.

¹¹⁴ **IBN AL-JATIB, Lisan Al-Din** (1977) *Al-Ihata fi Ajbari Granata*, First Edition of M. 'A. 'Inan, Al-Qahira, Vol. 4, p. 33.

AHMAD IBN MUHAMMAD AL-MAQQARI (1997) *Nafh at-ṭib min gusn Al-Andalus Al-raṭib*, verification of de Iḥsan 'Abbas, Dar Ṣadir, Beirut, 1997, Vol. II, p. 196.



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(1973). I am seventy and philosophy of Sufism. Published by the Lebanese Dar book for printing, publishing and distribution.

On the other hand, his brother Abu Talib served as an ambassador of Ibn Hud to the Pope Gregorio IX in Rome in 1245, to resolve a broken agreement between “the king of the Christians” and the Muslims¹¹⁵. Makkari¹¹⁶ gives us

Both cited by **EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah** (2014) *El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.)*. Dissertation, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ **MOLINA LOPEZ, Emilio** (1980) *Murcia en el marco historico del segundo tercio del siglo XIII (1212-1258)*

FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ, Francisco (1866) *Los mudéjares de Castillo*, p. 104.

GARCIA ANTON, J. (1980) *La cultura Arabe en Murcia*. In: *Historia de la Region de Murcia, Tomo III, Ediciones Mediterraneo S. A., Murcia*, pp. 257-258.

¹¹⁶ **AMARI, Michele** (1853) *Questions Philosophiques adressées aux savants musulmans, para l’empereur Frédéric II*. In: *Joural asiatique*,

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a passage from another author, according to which Ibn Sab'in was known even in Italy, the papal court. The Emir Abd Allah Ibn Hud, according to this author, had just made a peace treaty with the Christian tyrant. The latter had broken his word and failed to fulfill the stipulated conditions; Abd Allah Ibn Hud was found in need and sent an embassy to the high priest serving in Rome. He instructed Abu Taleb Ibn Sab'in, brother of Mohammed Abd el-Haqq, to go and to present his complaints. Arriving in this city, where never a Muslim had set a foot, Abu Taleb carried out his mission. Then they asked him about his personal matters. Having answered on a desirable way, Abu Taleb perceived that the Pope was directing him to those around him. He told them words in a barbarous language, whose meaning was explained to the Muslim ambassador. It resulted in the following terms: "Know that the brother of him (the brother of Abu Taleb) is a sage man. Today, there does not exist among Muslims somebody who knows God better than he does"¹¹⁷.

According to Abdellah El Moussaoui¹¹⁸, in his youth, Ibn Sab'in began studying Humanities under the direction of

5, number 1, Paris. (Ms. Huntington 534, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford), pp. 251-252.

AḤMAD IBN MUḤAMMAD AL-MAQQARI (1997) *Nafḥ at-ṭib min gusn Al-Andalus Al-raṭib*, verification of de Iḥsan 'Abbas, Dar Ṣadir, Beirut, 1997, Vol. II, p. 201.

IBN AL-JATIB, *Lisan Al-Din* (1977) *Al-Ihata fi Ajbari Granata*, First Edition of M. 'A. 'Inan, Al-Qahira, Vol. 2, p. 34.

¹¹⁷ **GASPAR REMIRO, Mariano** (1905) *Historia de Murcia musulmana: obra laureada*. Zaragoza, Andrés Uriarte, p. 337.

¹¹⁸ **EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah** (2014) *El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.)*. Tesis doctoral. Facultad de Filosofía. Departamento de Filosofía III (Hermenéutica y Filosofía de la Historia. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, p. 36.

«Abdellah El Moussaoui Taib es Doctor en filosofía por la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Instituto ciencias de las

some great teachers of his time. He also studied law and disciplines relating to philosophy, the latter showing as the most preferred course, especially formal logic, metaphysics, physics and arithmetic. On the other hand, he studied the science of the methodology called in Arabic "Ilm Al-Usul" exerted by the school As'ari. In addition, according to the biographer Ibn Al-Imad Al-Hanbali Ibn Sab'in passed through knowledgeable awareness of medicine, chemistry and white magic "Simya" and was well aware of the science of the secrets of alphabets "Ilm Asrar Al-Huruf." He studied under the direction of Ibn Ahla¹¹⁹ (d. 1247), and Ishaq b. Al-Mar'a¹²⁰ b. Dahhaq¹²¹, originally from Malaga and commentator of the *Mahasin Al-mayalis* de Ibn Al-'Arif¹²². Oliver Leaman states that he was the follower of the Shuzi Sufi Way, founded by Al-Shuzi of Seville. This was the continuation of the school founded by Ibn Masarra¹²³.

religiones (Madrid). Departamento de Hermenéutica y Filosofía de la Historia III en la Facultad de Filosofía. Especialista en filosofía islámica y medieval.»

¹¹⁹ **VAHID BROWN, J.** (2006) Muhammad b. Masarra Al-Jabali and his Place in Medieval Islamic Intellectual History: Towards a Reappraisal. Thesis presented to the Division of Philosophy, Religion and Psychology Reed College. (Portland, Oregon, USA), p. 106.

¹²⁰ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1962) Ibn Sab'in et la 'conspiration anti-hallagienne' en Andalousie et en Orient du XIIIe siècle. In: *Études d'orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal*: Paris, G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, Vol. 2: pp. 661-683.

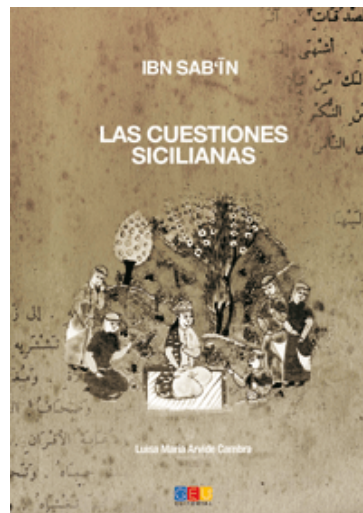
¹²¹ **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su "Budd Al-'arif," *Al-Andalus*, IX(1944), 371-417. In p. 374.

¹²² **LOMBA, Joaquín** (2013) El pensamiento islámico occidental. In: *Enciclopedia Iberoamericana de Filosofía*, Vol. 19, pp. 235-280. In p. 272.

¹²³ **LEAMAN, Oliver** (2006) *Encyclopaedia of Asian Philosophy*, p. 250.

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At the age of fifteen, he astonished the scholars of Spain with his book titled: *Separation of knowledge*. Ibn Sab'in came from a noble family, apparently endowed with abundant wealth and deep roots in Spain; He was from the Banu Sab'in descendants of 'Ali. His father, Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Nasr b. Muhammad was a senior official as governor in the city of Murcia and belonged to one of the noblest families in Morocco. Although the name of Ibn Sab'in was exceptionally famous, the same can be said of his brother, Abu Talib, who for a time was ambassador of Prince Abd Allah b. Hud to the Pope in Rome to negotiate a broken promise by the king of the Christians with the Muslims¹²⁴.



Ibn Sab'in of María Luisa Arvide Cambra (Spanish book)¹²⁵

¹²⁴ **DARÍO CABANELAS, O.F.M.** (1955) Federico II de Sicilia e Ibn Sab'in de Murcia. "Las cuestiones sicilianas". En: Miscelanea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos Universidad de Granada, 1955-IV, pp. 31-64.

¹²⁵ **ARVIDE CAMBRA, Luisa Arvide** (2009) Las Cuestiones Sicilianas. Publisher GEU, Granada.

After completing his studies in jurisprudence and philosophy, he showed a decided taste for this latest science. In the words of an anonymous, quoted by Makkari he followed the voice of his master Abu Ishak Ibn Dihak, but it would seem that this was not without danger, and Ibn Sab'in found himself early exposed to the attacks of fanaticism. In effect, having started teaching grammar and belles-lettres, he left Spain to establish himself in the African Almohads States.

If we have to believe Lisan Al-Din Ibn Al-Khatib (d. 776/1375), then Hermetism was widespread in medieval Spain. Hermetic teachings were followed by a number of thirteenth-century Andalusian Muslims apart from Ibn Sabín. Ibn Khaldun (732-1332/808-1406) also mentions a large group of people from Eastern Spain and the Ricote Valley¹²⁶. According to him, Ricote was a center of Hermetism¹²⁷ in Muslim Spain.

¹²⁶ **AL-KHALDUN** (1991) *La voie et la loi ou le Maître et le juriste*, pp. 279-270, N°. 135.

¹²⁷ More about Hermetism in:

Unknown (1850) *Suggestive inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery with a dissertation on the more celebrated of the Alchemical Philisophers being an attempt towards the recovery of the Ancient Experiment of Nature*. Trelawney Saunders, London.

BILLINGS III, Louis Albert (2007) *The Nature, Structure, and Role of the Soul in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*. A thesis presented to the faculty of California State Universiyt Dominguez Hills.

TEMPLE, Richard (2007) *Pieter Bruegel and Esoteric Tradition*. A doctoral thesis. Princes School of Traditional Arts, London.

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The Muslim Hermetist¹²⁸, Ibn Sab'in practiced Neoplatonism¹²⁹ or "Platonic Orientalism". The last one is a term used by John Walbridge¹³⁰ who identified in a study of Shihab Al-Din Yahya Al-Suhrawardi (d. 1191) at least four themes that were characteristic of medieval Islamic Hermetism¹³¹:

1. A conception of "higher philosophy" as a form of revelation;
2. A primordial wisdom tradition (*himak qadima*) that included Egyptian pages such as Hermes Trismegistus and Pre-Socratic mystical philosophers such as Pythagoras and Empedocles;
3. An illuminationist (*ishraqi*) mysticism that used light as metaphor for revelation¹³²;
4. Legitimation of the occult and openness to theurgy (Gr. *Semeia*, Ar. *Al-simiyya*) and other "sciences" based on the concept of Universal Sympathy.
5. An elite interconfessionalism in which terminology and mythical constructs are shared across religious boundaries.

¹²⁸ **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (1998) The Worship of a Muslim Hermetists: The Prayers of Ibn Sab'in. In: Avoda and Ibada. Liturgy and Ritual in Islamic and Judaic Traditions. Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies. Center for Judaic Studies. University of Denver 8. – 10.03.1998.

¹²⁹ **REVEL, Albert** (1880) Le congrès des orientalistes à Florence. In: Revue de théologie et de philosophie et compte rendu des principales publications scientifiques, Volume 13, pp. 533-558. In pp. 554-555.

¹³⁰ **WALBRIDGE, John** (2001) The Wisdom of the Mystic East: Suhrawardi and Platonic Orientalism. Albany: State University of New York Press.

¹³¹ **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (2007) The all-Comprehensive Circle (Al-Ihata): Soul, Intellect, and the Oneness of Existence in the Doctrine of Ibn Sab'in. In: Sufism and Theology. Edited by Ayman Shihadeh, 31-48. In p. 32.

¹³² **TEMPLETON, Kirk** (2013) Suhrawardi, Abhinavagutpa, and the Metaphysics of Light. A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the California Institute of Integral Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy and Religion with a concentration in Asian and Comparative Studies. California Institute of Integral Studies. San Francisco, CA.

Furthermore, Elizabeth Sirriyeh¹³³ narrates the work of: ‘Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabulusi (1641-1731) in relationship with Ibn Sab’in:

Had inquirers turned to Ibn Sab’in’s own best-known work *Budd Al-‘arif* (*The Escape [or the Prerequisite] of the Gnostic*), they would have found him testifying to this debt to the traditions of late antiquity, stating in this Introduction: “I petitioned God (*astakhartu li ‘llah*) to propagate [through me] the wisdom (*hikma*) which Hermes Trismegistus (*Al-haramisa*) revealed in the earliest times.” For Ibn Sab’in, the figure of Hermes Trismegistus, whom he also terms “our greatest impeccable teacher” and “the greatest sage”, appears to take precedence over Prophet Muhammad.



ADLOUNI MUHAMMAD AL-IDRISI AND THE SON OF SEVENTY (2006). *Mysticism in philosophy of the son of seventy*.

¹³³ **SIRRIYEH, Elizabeth** (2005) *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: ‘Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731*. RoutledgeCurzon, New York, NY 10016, p. 11.

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Ricote, a small village between Blanca and Archena

In this respect it is interesting to observe the ideas of Ibn Sab'in in relationship with Ibn Sina (980-1037), who he considers an intentionally misleading sophist¹³⁴:

..like Suhrawardi in the East, Ibn Sab'in claims that he, no Ibn Sina [Avicenna], was the first to unfold the secrets of illuminationist philosophy, which has been employed by the ancients before logic and dialectic were invented. Despite the fact that Suhrawardi shows more respect for Ibn Sina than Ibn Sab'in, his position toward him in relation to illuminationist philosophy is in essence not different from that of Ibn Sab'in. Suhrawardi says: "You should know that the great sages... such

¹³⁴ **BASHIER, Salman H.** (2011) *The story of Islamic Philosophy: Ibn tufayl, Ibn Al-'Arabi, and Others on the Limit between Naturalism and Traditionalism.* State University o New York Press, Albany, NY., p. 13.

as the father of the sages Hermes and, before him, Agathadaemon and also Phythagoras and Empedocles and the majestically great philosopher Plato were greater in measure and nobler in significance than all those who excelled from among the Islamic logicians..

It is difficult to find out whether Ibn Sab'in came to know of Suhrawardi¹³⁵. Was it in Spain or in Morocco? Anyway it does demonstrate the large geographical span reached by Shurawardi's ideas. Ibn Sab'in, who lived in Morocco, refers to the *Al-Talwihat* of Suhrawardi in his book *Al-Risalat Al-faqiriyyah*¹³⁶.

According to Ibn Al-Khatib the Sufi, the Hermetist and political activist Ibn Ahla of Lorca (d.645/1247) was the actual teacher of Ibn Sab'in¹³⁷.

Furthermore, Ibn Al-Khatib states that Ibn Sab'in had a beautiful face, thin skin like a king, a noble character, and he was unrelated to any affectation¹³⁸. On the other hand, there also was an autonomous government of Abu Ya 'far Ibn 'Isam, known as the "Wizara 'Isamiyya" or "Ministry of 'Isam" in Orihuela.

¹³⁵ More about Suhrawardi in:

TEMPLETON, Kirk (2013) Suhrawardi, Abhinavagutpa, and the Metaphysics of light. A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the California Institute of Integral Studies. San Francisco, CA.

¹³⁶ **MEHDI AIN RAZAVI** (1997) Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination. Routledge, New York, NY 10017, p. 141.

¹³⁷ **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (1997) The way of the Axial Intellect. The Islamic Hermetism of Ibn Sab'in. In: Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, Volume XXII, pp. 41-79. Citation p. 58.

¹³⁸ **IBN AL-JATIB, Lisan Al-Din.** Al-Ihata fi Ajbari Granata. Cited by **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'tarif. In: Al-Andalus, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 379.

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During his journey from Murcia passing Granada, he was accompanied by a troop of followers and devotees. In Granada he settled in a Ribat named *Ukab* located West of the town¹³⁹. There, he already made public profession of asceticism. His followers were known as Al-Sab'iniyyah and wore special clothing that has been criticized by the fuqaha (jurists).

"A bitter and tormented spirit", L. Massignon called him¹⁴⁰. His life, consisting entirely of controversies, quarrels and persecutions, seems to have been a long and painful trial, alleviated however by the love and loyalty bestowed on him by his disciples, the sab'iniyya, men humble of heart and living in poverty. The difficulty of reconstructing the true personality of Ibn Sab'in¹⁴¹ is quite evident, as his biographer's opinion range from the wisest and holiest of men, to qualify the wickedest of mortals. Let us be mindful that we are facing the most illustrious and outstanding personality that has emerged in Ricote Valley along its millenary history and the most universal of all the valricoties of all time. No doubt that he was an educated man, intelligent and knowledgeable. Having an excellent knowledge of the origin of Sufism and mysticism existing in Andalus, he was one of the most

¹³⁹ **IBN AL-JATIB, Lisan Al-Din** (1977) *Al-Ihata fi Ajbari Granata*, First Edition of M. 'A. 'Inan, Al-Qahira, Vol. 2, p. 37. Cited by **ABDELLAH EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB** (2014) *El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.)*. Dissertation, p. 40.

¹⁴⁰ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1929) *Recueil De Textes Inédits Concernant L'Histoire De La Mystique En Pays D'Islam*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.

FAURE, Adalophe (1960-2006) Ibn Sab'in. In: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 921 – 922.

¹⁴¹ **URVOY, Dominique and URVOY, Marie Thérèse** (1997) Un "penseur de frontière" en Islama: Ibn Sab'in. In: *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*, N° 98, Janvier-Mars, Toulouse.

revered teachers of his time. He had been followed by numerous disciples who later founded the Tariqa Sab'iniyya, widespread in the East along the entire Middle Ages.

But his schoolmasterly tone is most unpleasant, and we discover in the end that all this is a mere preliminary discipline, leading in itself to agnosticism and a recognition that there is nothing but vanity in this world, and that only in the vision of the Sufi can certainty and peace be found. So we have again the circle through which Al-Ghazzali went. Such as highlighted by Ibn Rushd, the prophet with Ibn Sab'in, takes higher rank than the Sage. Beyond the current division of the soul into the vegetative, the animal and the reasonable, he adds two others, derived from the reasonable, the soul of wisdom and the soul of prophecy. The first of these is the soul of the philosopher, and the other of the prophet; and the last is the highest. Of the reasonable soul upward, he predicates immortality¹⁴².

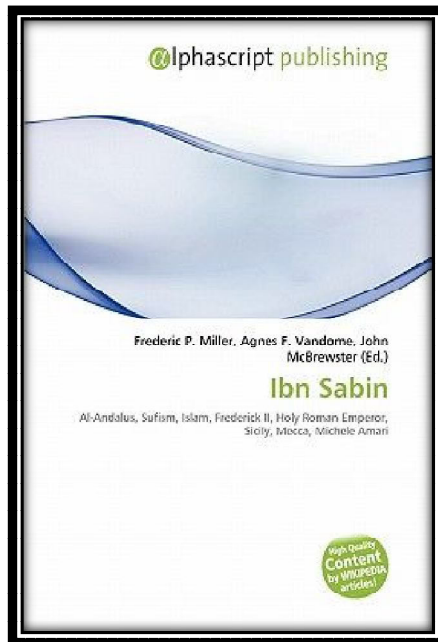
On the other hand, his Sufism was suspect; he was reproached for some of his doctrinal assertions, among others, that in which he defined God as being the sole reality of existing things; this was regarded as a profession of monist faith, which his own position as a Hellenizing philosopher could only render more suspect in the eyes of the "ulama" and "fukaha". He was compelled to leave his native land, being about thirty years old¹⁴³, in order to escape from the persecution by his enemies. Followed by a group of disciples, he settled in Ceuta.

¹⁴² **DUNCAN BLACK, Macdonald** (1903) *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*. New York, pp. 263.

¹⁴³ **IBN SAKIR AL-KUTUBI** (1980) *Fawat Al-Wafayat.* 'Uyun Al-Tawarij, Al-Qahira, Vol. II, p. 407.

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In Ceuta Ibn Sab'in came in contact with a rich woman who was infatuated by his youth and good looks. She proposed him to marry her to which Ibn Sab'in agreed. Once married, he persuaded his new wife to build a Sufi zawiya in her house and used here money to support a large retinue of disciples. Apparently he was not the first foreigner who did so. Al-Turtusi (d. 1126) married in Alexandria a rich widow, which allowed the foundation of a madrasa where he devoted himself to teaching¹⁴⁴.



Ibn Sab'in in South Africa by means of Wikipedia articles

¹⁴⁴ **FIERRO BELLO, Maribel** (2011) Ulemas en las ciudades andalusíes: Religión, política y prácticas sociales. In: I Congreso Internacional. Escenarios urbanos de Al-Andalus y el Occidente musulmán. Vélez-Málaga, 16-18 de junio de 2010. Edición científica: Virgilio Martínez Enamorado, pp. 135-165. In p. 145.

There, resident in Ceuta, he has few quiet years that he used to write his main works. It was at the town Ceuta where he composed at the request of the governor of the city, Ibn Khalas, his treatise for Frederick II. This writig is now in the Bodleian Library¹⁴⁵. This treatise was a reply to a letter that Frederick II of Hohenstaufen of Sicily had sent to the Almohad Sultan Al-Rasid. At that time, he had more than twenty-five years as we observe, by comparing the

¹⁴⁵ **MEHREN, August Ferdinand Michael** (1880) *Correspondance du Philosophe Soufi Ibn Sab'in Abd Oul-Haqq avec l'Empereur Frédéric II de Hohenstaufen*, Paris. (French translation of Question II). **MEHREN, August Ferdinand Michael** (1879) *Correspondance du Philosophe Soufi Ibn Sab'in Abd Oul-Haqq avec l'Empereur Frédéric II de Hohenstaufen*, Paris. (French translation of Question II). Extract du *Journal Asiatique*, 14, pp. 341-354.

AMARI, Michele (1853) *Questions Philosophiques adressées aux savants musulmans, para l'empereur Frédéric II*. In: *Journal asiatique*, 5, number 1, Paris. (Ms. Huntington 534, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford).

GRIGNASCHI, Mario (1955) *Ibnu Sab'in, Al-Kalamu 'ala-l-masa'ili -ç-çiqiliyyati*. Trattato sulle domande siciliane. Domanda II. Traduzione e comment. In: *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, 3. Série, 7, pp. 7-91. (French translation of Question II).

ABU RIDA (1994) *Bayna Al-imbiratur Fridrik Al-tani wa Ibn Sab'in. Tahlil li-agwiba Al-faylasuf Al-muslim 'ala as'ila Al-imbiratur Al-mustanir. Ra'y Aristu fi qidam Al-'alam*. In: *Alifba*, 16, pp. 1-17.

BURNETT, Charles (1995) *Master Theodore, Frederick II's Philosopher*. In: *Federico II e la nuove culture*, Atti del XXXI convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 9-12 ottobre 1994. Spoleto, pp. 225-285.

HANAFI HASAN (1992) *Ruh Al-andalus wa nahda Al-garb Al-hadith, qira' a fi l-masa'il Al-siqilliyya l-Ibn Sab'in*. In: *Humurn Al fikr wa'l-watan*, vol. I. Al-Andalus, Al-Qahira, pp. 145-163.

MANDALÀ, Giuseppe (2007) *Il Prologo delle Risposte alle questioni siciliane di Ibn Sab'in come fonte storica. Politica mediterranea e cultura arabo-islamica nell'età di Federico II*. In: *Schede Medievali* 45, pp. 5-94.

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date of birth of the death of the Almohad caliph Abd el-Wahid ar-Rashid (630-640/1232-1242), and as confirmed by the following passage of Lisan-Din Ibn Khatib quoted by Makkari.

The Emperor Frederick II is a subject of perennial interest to the historian¹⁴⁶. The riddle of his many-sided personality, his place at the centre of one of the great struggles of European politics, the striking anticipation of more modern ideas and practices in his administration, the brilliant and precocious culture of his Sicilian kingdom, have attracted the attention of various generations of scholars without definitive results. The intellectual life of Frederick's court cannot be regarded as an isolated or merely personal phenomenon. Lying between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, it must be seen against the cosmopolitan background of Norman Sicily, the meeting-point of Greek, Arabic, and Latin culture, central in the history as in the geography of the Mediterranean lands.

The emperor's scientific habit of mind is seen best of all in his own writings. His treatise on falconry, *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus*, is compact of personal observation of the habits of birds, especially falcons, carried on throughout a busy life of sport and study, and verified by birds and falconers brought from distant lands. Frederick's statements are supported by facts rather than by authority or mere personal opinion. If information is lacking no conclusion is drawn. One who reads the treatise on ornithology *De Arte* through gets inevitably the impression of the work of a first-rate mind, open, inquiring, realistic, trying to see things as they are without

¹⁴⁶ **PUSINO, Ivan** (1929) Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien und in Russland (Versuch einer vergleichenden Analyse). In: Historische Zeitschrift, Bd. 140, H. 1 pp. 23-56. In p. 25.

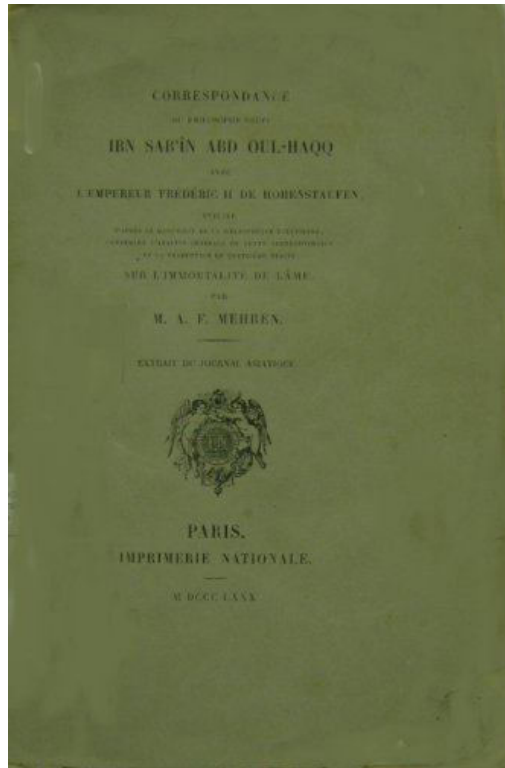
parti pris, and working throughout on the basis of systematized experience.

Observation and experiment on a large scale Frederick, supplemented by the questionnaire, applied not only to the scholars of his court and the experts who came at his summons, but to savants of other lands whom he could not interrogate personally. The method seems to have been to draw up a list of questions upon which the emperor could get no final or satisfactory response at home, and to send them to other rulers, most naturally the Mohammedan princes, requesting that they be submitted to the leading local scholars for answer. This was a procedure which assumes autocratic governments like that which Frederick himself utilized to satisfy intellectual curiosity.



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Such was the practice followed in the most famous instance, the so-called Sicilian questions¹⁴⁷, published by Amari¹⁴⁸.



Ibn Sab'in of M.A.F. Mehren (France book)

¹⁴⁷ **JANSSENS, Jules L.** (2007) A Remarkable Thirteenth-Century Compendium of «Aristotelian» Philosophy: Ibn Sab'in's «Sicilian Questions» (RE: A Text and Study by Anna Akasoy). In: *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, Louvain-la-Neuve 49, pp. 51-66.

¹⁴⁸ **AMARI, Michele** (1853) Questions Philosophiques adressées aux savants musulmans, para l'empereur Frédéric II. In: *Journal asiatique*, 5, number 1, Paris. (Ms. Huntington 534, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford), pp. 240-274.

According to the response which has reached us, Frederick, not long before 1242, sent a series of questions to be answered by Mohammedan philosophers in Egypt, Syria, Irak, Asia Minor, and Yemen, and later to the Almohad caliph of Morocco, ar-Rashid, by whom they were forwarded, with a sum of money as the emperor's reward, to Ibn Sab'in, a Spanish philosopher then living at Ceuta.

Refusing the money, Ibn Sab'in answers at some length in terms of Mohammedan orthodoxy, expressing some contempt for Frederick's attainments as seen in his untechnical phraseology, and offering to set him right in a personal interview.

The emperor's questions, as they are here cited in refutation, cover the eternity of matter and the immortality of the soul, the end and foundations of theology, and the number and nature of the categories-demanding always the proofs of the opinions advanced in reply. Thus: "Aristotle the sage in all his writings declares clearly the existence of the world from all eternity"¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁹ **GILLIOT, Claude** (1998) *Mythe et théologie: calame et intellect, prédestination et libre arbitre*. In: *Arabica*, T. 45, Fasc. 2, pp. 151-192. In p. 182.

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Ibn Sab'in (Lebanese book)

If he demonstrates this, what are his arguments, and if not, what is the nature of his reasoning on this matter?" Plainly Frederick was familiar with the Aristotelian doctrines which agitated the Christian and Mohammedan worlds in the 13th century, indeed there was a legend that Averroes had lived at his court!" The very suggestion of doubt respecting immortality was enough to justify the current belief that Frederick was one of those Epicurean heretics "who make the soul die with the body"¹⁵⁰.

¹⁵⁰ **HASKINS, Charles. H.** (1922) Science at the Court of the Emperor Frederick II. In: The American Historical Review, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Jul, 1922), pp. 669-694. Citing here pp. 688-689.

HASKINS, Charles. H. (1921) Michael Scot and Frederick II. In: Isis, Vol. 4, N° 2, pp. 250-275. In p. 268.

That sovereign had adopted it fully. In his "Sicilian Questions" he had demanded light on the eternity of the world, and on the nature of the soul, and supposed he had found it in the replies of Ibn Sab'in, an upholder of these doctrines. But in his conflict with the papacy he was overthrown, and with him these heresies were destroyed¹⁵¹.

The wise man, like his correspondent the Emperor of Rome, was accused of irreligion by the bigots of his own creed. He therefore strove to silence his enemies, who in the end drove him into exile, by setting himself up as the haughty champion of Islam against Christian caviliers.

Frederick had already in vain sent his Questions into Egypt, Syria, Irak, Daroub, Yemen, and Tunis; no satisfactory solution had come. He then sent them by an Ambassador to Raschid, the Caliph of Spain, who pitched upon Ibn Sab'in to solve them. The philosopher received them with a smile, answered them, and refused the Emperor's proffered guerdon, only desiring the conversion of the Christian. He besought Allah to turn the learner from the doctrine of vague reasoning, and to bring him to the certainty of truth. Ibn Sab'in begins by rebuking the Emperor for using inexact and obscure language, when treating points that had puzzled the greatest philosophers, and for falsely attributing to Aristotle the theory of the world's existence from everlasting. He then lays down the

HAMPE, K. (1899) Kaiser Friedrich II. In: *Historische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 83, H. 1, pp. 1-42. In p. 24.

NIESE, Hans (1912) Zur Geschichte des geistigen Lebens am Hofe Kaiser Friedrichs II. In: *Historische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 108, H. 3, pp. 473-540. In p. 500.

¹⁵¹ **DRAPER, John William** (1915) *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. New York, p. 151.

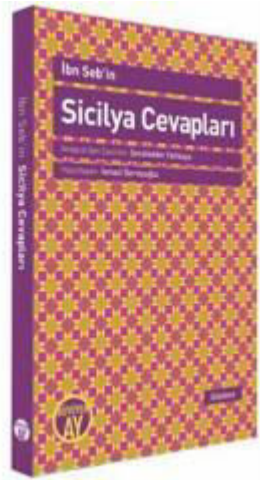
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exact meaning of certain Arabic words loosely used by Frederick in one Question as to the existence of the world, and he ends by pronouncing that our planet was created. The second Question was, "What is the end of Theology, and what are the preliminary theories indispensable to it?" Ibn Sab'in quotes largely from Aristotle¹⁵², but answers that the preliminaries required are doctrine and works, and that their subject is the Koran. "The best thing," writes the Moslem, "would be to have a personal interview with you; for your questions prove that you know not the sciences, and that you have not tasted speculative doctrines, though you desire to walk in the way of truth. If you cannot come to me yourself, you might send a man of scholastic attainments, who is in your confidence. You must know that all these questions of yours are already known here, better than a beacon fire. Another time you must throw them into a more obscure form; for we have Mussulman doctors, sharper than swords or scissors, men who are not true philosophers, but mere wiseacres; these men are not versed in these discussions, and they conclude that both the questioner and the respondent are fools. If these men knew that I had answered this part of your Questions, they would regard me as they do the problems; and then I might escape or not, as Allah might direct."

The third Question was on the subject of the Ten Categories, their use, and their real number. Ibn Sab'in sees clearly that Frederick is one of the crowd void of intelligence, and moreover unable to explain his own meaning. The teacher goes on, in a strain provokingly

¹⁵² **ROWSON, Everett K.** (1984) An Unpublished Work by Al-Amri and the Date of the Arabic *De causis*. In: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol.104, N° 1, Studies in Islam and the Ancient Near East Dedicated to Franz Rosenthal, pp. 193-199. In p. 194. (It treats the *Kitab Mahd Al-khayr*).

pedantic and dogmatic way, to complain of the feeble capacity, inexperience, and obtuseness of the Imperial student, who contradicted himself. He then answers Frederick's Question as to the soul and as to the proof of its immortality, by sending the questioner to the Koran, the Pentateuch, the Gospel, the Psalms, the Sohoofs, Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle. He discusses Mohammed's words; "The heart of the believer is between two fingers of the Merciful." The whole ends with a wish expressed by the Mussulman, that he may have an opportunity of speaking mouth to mouth with the Christian. The reputation of the sage was well known at Rome, where the Pope himself avowed that no Mussulman knew God better than did Ibn Sab'in¹⁵³.



Ibn Sab'in (Turkish book)

¹⁵³ **KINGTON, T.L.** (1862) History of Frederick the Second, London. Vol. I, pp. 436-438.

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Huizinga¹⁵⁴ sees this as a game between two players. The issue of "Sicilian Questions" to Ibn Sab'in is much more purely philosophical, and is skeptical and Aristotelian in tone. But it shows traces of the old spirit. The young Mohammedan philosopher frankly lectures the Emperor in the sense of: "Your questions are foolish and awkward and contradictory!" The Emperor takes this pertness in good part, and for this one of his German biographers, Hampe, praises his "humanity". It is more likely that Frederick knew, as did Menander, that the game of question and answer must be played on an equal footing; hence the players conversed, in the words of old Nagasena, "not as kings but as the wise".

Sometime later when Ibn was twenty-eight, Ibn Sab'in wrote his most famous book, *Budd al.'arif* (643/1245). According to Al-Badisi, Ibn Sab'in was expelled from Ceuta for writing this work. However, this was not the only reason. In 643/1246, the governor of Ceuta, Ibn J alas, was forced to abdicate. A religious leader, Al-Sharri (1175-1252) had founded in February 1238 a Madrasa of the Al-Shariyya movement. After the death of the Almohad calip Abd el-Wahid ar-Rashid (630-640/1232-1242), Al-Sharri saw his opportunity and expelled the Governor Ibn J alas from the town. This is again a proof that religious life and Government went together.

Therefore, Ibn Sab'in went into exile. This occurred only a few months after Ibn Sab'in had completed his book. Without his powerful patron Ibn J alas, he came in a hostile environment with the Government. For that reason Ibn Sab'in and his disciples left Ceuta and he took a way eastward across Bades, in Morocco. There, he devoted

¹⁵⁴ **HUIZINGA, J.** (1950) *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. Roy Publishers, New York, p.115.

himself some time to teaching and to seminars on mysticism in one of the mosques. However, he did not stay there for a long time and the reasons for his departure from this town are unknown. Thereafter, he went for the Algerian city of Bijaya (Bougie, Vela). In this town, that also had a large Andalusian population, lived the Algerian historian Ahmad Al-Gubrini (d. 704/1304) and he also met in this town Abu al_hasam Al-Shushtarí (610-668/1213-1269), who became in 1248 the most faithful, as well as the most moving, of all this disciples.



The town Bougie (Vela). Photo: Zil (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Al-Shushtari, who was some four years older than his master, wrote three poems in the honor of Ibn Sab'in stating in the poems that he was the slave of Ibn Sab'in. He describes his master as “the magnet of souls”

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(*maqnatis Al-nuftus*)¹⁵⁵. Shushtari became the leader of the Sab'iniyya in Egypt. Thanks to the research of Vincent J. Cornell we know the favourable opinion of Al-GubrinI expressed in the catalogue of scholars who lived in the city of Bijaya during the thirteenth century¹⁵⁶:

This catalogue of scholars who lived in the city of Bijaya during the thirteenth century CE differs from other sources on Ibn Sab'in in that it highlights the respect with which the Murian was received after leaving Sabta Rather than condemning him as a hypocrite as Al-Badisi does, Al-GubrinI instead praised Ibn Sab'in's intelligence, wisdom, and understanding. He is also impressed by his rhetorical skill, eloquence, and fluency in the Arabic language. Unlike in Sabta, Ibn Sab'in was popular among both the Sufic (*fuqara*) and of common people (*'ammat Al-nas*) Bijaya. We are also told that he was devoted to the Sacred Mosque of Mecca and made the *hajj* pilgrimage every year. When he finally moved to Mecca permanently, he was sought out like no one else by pilgrims from the Maghrib.

Ibn Sab'in does not appear in the structure of the scientific community of Bougie¹⁵⁷. However, he expressed his admiration for Ibn Rabi' (d. 1277), who was versed in mathematics and Science legacies¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁵ CASEWIT, Yousef Alexander (2008) The Objective of Metaphysics in Ibn Sab'in's Answers to the Sicilian Questions. In: *Iqbal Review* (Pakistan), Vol. 49, N° 2, pp. 1-6.

¹⁵⁶ CORNELL, Vincent J. (1997) The way of the Axial Intellect. The Islamic Hermetism of Ibn Sab'in. In: *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, Volume XXII, pp. 41-79. Citation p. 47.

¹⁵⁷ URVOY, Dominique (1976) La structuration du monde des Ulemas a Bougie au VIIe/XIIIe siècle. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 43, pp. 87-107. In p. 104.

¹⁵⁸ AISSANI AND ALL., D. (1994) The Mathematics in the médiéval Bougie and Fibonacci . In the Book: *Leonardo Fibonacci: il Tempo, le opere, l'eredità scientifica*. Pacini Editore (IBM Italia), Pisa, pp. 67-82. In p. 73.

Cited by AISSANI, Djamil & VALERIAN, Dominique (2003) *Mathématiques, commerce et société à Béjaia (Bugia) au moment du*

Continuing on his way eastwards, he came to Tunis. In a milieu of orthodox Islam, this Aristotelian Sufi once again came up against the hostility of the "ulama". To escape from his chief enemy, Abu Bakr Al-Sakuni (d. 649/1251), a theologian from Seville who had settled in Tunis, he hurriedly left the town. Furthermore, as related by Ibn Sakir, the same Al-Sakuni criticized the disciples of Ibn Sab'in¹⁵⁹. There is a record of his journey on to Gabes (Capes) in Tunisia, and thence to Cairo. But there he scarcely felt secure and the great Mamluk sultan Baybars I was ill-disposed towards him.

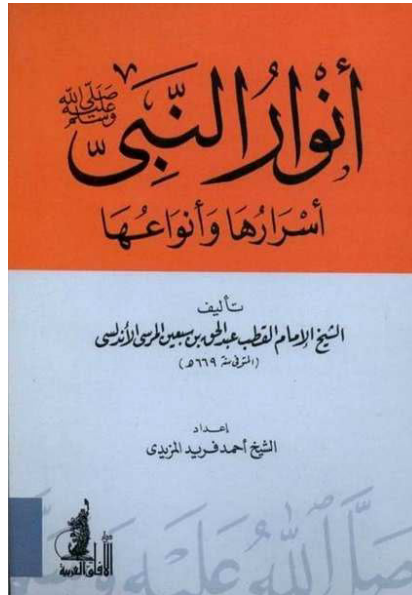
According to Moussaoui¹⁶⁰, the presence of two principal fuqaha', Al-Cadi Ibn Daqiq Al-'Ayyid (d. 702 /1302-3) and Abu bakr Qutb Al-Din Al-Qasṭalani (d. 686 h /1287) prevented Ibn Sab'in to exercise his doctrine, comfortably. They began to direct him their critics, and they tried to propagate the esoteric thinking of the mystic.

séjour de Leonardo Fibonacci (XIIe-XIIIe siècles). In: Bollettino di Storia delle Scienze Matematiche, Fabrizio Serra editore, XXIII (2), pp. 9-31. In p. 18.

¹⁵⁹ **IBN SAKIR AL-KUTUBI** (1980) *Uyun Al Tawarij*. Al-Qahira, Vol. XX, p. 407. **ABDELLAH EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB** (2014) *El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin*, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Dissertation, p. 42.

¹⁶⁰ **ABDELLAH EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB** (2014) *El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin*, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Dissertation, p. 43.

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ABDELHAK BEN SEVENTY MURSI ANDALUSIAN
(2007). **Lights Prophet, peace be upon him, secrets and**
types. Preparation: Sheik Ahmad Farid Mazidi. Publisher:
Dar Al.-Arab outlook.

They first criticized the literary sab'iní style calling it a delirium, while the latter condemned his reasoning, because it had heretical concepts and, therefore, anti-Islamic ones. Faced with these accusations, Ibn Sab'in decided to go away from the region by leaving to Mecca after the year 642-647/1245-1250 in search of a better environment for his da'wa work. If one has to believe Elizabeth Sirriyeh, then Afif Al-Din Tilimsani (d. 1291) was the son of law of Ibn Sab'in¹⁶¹. Tilimsani had met Ibn 'Arabi in Damascus. From a manuscript of Ibn 'Arabi's *Futûhât*, we learn that 'Afif Al-Din and Qunawi were

¹⁶¹ **SIRRIYEH, Elizabeth** (2005) *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: 'Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731*. Oxon/New York, p. 9.

visiting the house of Ibn 'Arabi in Damascus¹⁶² at the same time in 634/1236-7. The mystic poet 'Afif Al-Din Sulayman Al-Tilimsani (1212-1291), who met Ibn Sab'in in Cairo, apparently was married with a daughter of Ibn Sab'in.



**SON OF SEVENTY AND MOHAMMED AHMED MANSOUR
(1993). Quartets of son of seventy.**

According to Taftazani¹⁶³ Ibn Sab'in was in Mecca in the year 1254. However, Al-Fasi¹⁶⁴ states that Ibn Sab'in arrived in the Peninsula in the year 1250. Ibn Al-Kathir

¹⁶² **UNKNOWN** (1964) Histoire et classification de l'oeuvre d'Ibn 'Arabi. Damascus, 1964, p. 209.

¹⁶³ **AL-TAFTAZANI Abu 'l-Wafa Al-Ganimi** (1973) Ibn Sab'in wa-falsafatuhu Al-sufiyya. Dar Al-kitab Al-lubnant, Bayrut.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Fasi. Al-'Iqd at-tamin

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relates somewhat bitterly that Ibn Sab'in was able to captivate the mind of Mecca's governor, the Sharif Abu Numay Ibn Abi Sa'id (r. 1254-1301), and lived peacefully as his protégé. Apparently Abu Numay needed Ibn Sab'in for his trunking with the nobility of the city. This also encouraged him seeing his good relations he claimed to have with the king of Yemen, Al-Malik Al-Muzaffar, Sams Al-din Yusuf I (1250-1295)¹⁶⁵. On the contrary, biographical sources mention a conflict between Ibn Sab'in and the Rasulid king of Yemen Al-Muzaffar Yusuf. During the years of Ibn Sab'in's stay in Mecca there was a continuous struggle for the authority in the Hijaz between Mamluks¹⁶⁶ and Rasulids, culminating precisely in the year 1270¹⁶⁷.

Abu Numay had received an injury in a certain war and his skull was shattered. Ibn Sab'in, who was an excellent physician, nursed Abu Numay and manufactured for his head a skullcap of dried pumpkin bark.¹⁶⁸ Kutubi

¹⁶⁵ **ZAMBAUR** (1927) Manuel de Généalogie et de Chronologie pour l'Histoire de l'Islam, Hanovre, Vol. I, p. 120. Cited by **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su "Budd Al-'arif," Al-Andalus, IX(1944), 371-417. In p. 377.

¹⁶⁶ **LITTLE, Donald P.** (1970) An introduction to Mumlük Historiography (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH.

¹⁶⁷ **AKASOY, Anna** (2008) The muhaqq as Mahdi? Ibn Sab'in and Madhism among Andalusian Mystics in the 12th/13th centuries. In: Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen. Herausgegeben von Wolfram Brandes und Felicitas Schmieder. Berlin, pp. 313-338. In p. 326.

¹⁶⁸ 'Abd Al-Haqq Ibn Isma'il Al-Badisi (1982) Al-Maqsad Al-sharif wa-l-manza' Al-latif fi l-ta'rif bi-sulaha' Al-Rif, ed. Sa'id A'rab (Rabat: Imprimerie Royale, 1982), pp. 34-35. Cited by: **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (2007) The all-Comprehensive Circle (Al-Ihata): Soul, Intellect, and the Oneness of Existence in the Doctrine of Ibn Sab'in. In: Sufism and Theology. Edited by Ayman Shihadeh, 31-48. In p. 31.

specifies that Ibn Sab'in spent in favor of the Meccans 80.000 dinars¹⁶⁹. With these events Ibn Sab'in gained esteem among the followers who were accepted by the Meccans. Shortly thereafter, the Meccans were more inclined to the doctrines of Ibn Sab'in and imitated the examples, proclaiming more liberality.

Thanks to the research of Vincent Cornell we observe that Gubrini (1246-1314) also praises Ibn Sab'in's wisdom, intelligence, and piety, and claims that when he eventually moved to Mecca, pilgrims from the Islamic West sought him out like no one else¹⁷⁰. Ibn Sab'in wrote for Abuy Numayy to the Hafsids Caliph¹⁷¹.

He lived in Mecca more than twenty years amid a circle of disciples; among them was the Sharif Abu Numayy himself. The reign of Muhammad Abu Numayy (1254-1301), a great-grandson of Qatada b. Idris, represented the apogee of Hasanid political independence in Mecca. The eyewitness Al-Tujibi observed that the protector and most fervent supporter of Zaydism in Mecca was the Grand

'Abd Al Haqq el-Badisi (1926) *Al-Maqsad*, trad. annotée de G.S. Colin, Archives Marocaines, XXVI, pp. 47-49 and 181-182. In p. 182. Cited by **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su "Budd Al-'arif," *Al-Andalus*, IX(1944), 371-417. In p. 377.

¹⁶⁹ **KUTUBLI** Fawat Al-wafayat.

¹⁷⁰ Abu l-'Abbas Ahmad Al-Gubrini (1970) 'Unwan Al-diraya fi man 'urifa min Al-'ulama fi l-mi'at Al-sabi a bi-Bijaya. Ed. Rahih Bunar (Algiers: Al-Sharika Al-Wataniyya li-l-Nash wa-l-Tawzi, p. 209. Cited by: **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (2007) The all-Comprehensive Circle (Al-Ihata): Soul, Intellect, and the Oneness of Existence in the Doctrine of Ibn Sab'in. In: *Sufism and Theology*. Edited by Ayman Shihadeh, 31-48. In p. 31.

¹⁷¹ **IBN KHALDUN** (1959) *Kitab Al-'ibar*, Beirut, VI, 634 ff. Cited by **AKASOY, Anna Ayse** (2008) Ibn Sab'in's Sicilian questions: The text, its sources, and their historical context. In: *Al-Qantara: Revista de Estudios Árabes*, 29 (1), pp 115-148. In p. 119.

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Sharif Abu Numayy himself¹⁷². The heckler Al-Badisi accused Ibn Sab'in that he could have converted himself to Shi'ism¹⁷³.

Baibars (1223 – 1 July 1277), was the fourth Sultan of Egypt from the Mamluk Bahri dynasty. He was one of the commanders of the Egyptian forces that inflicted a defeat on the Seventh Crusade of King Louis IX of France. He also led the vanguard of the Egyptian army at the Battle of Ain Jalut in 1260 which marked the first substantial defeat of the Mongol army and is considered a turning point in history. Ruling an empire that stretched from Cairo to Baghdad for over 17 years, Baybars, the ex-slave, was so beloved that he became known as "The Lion of Egypt".

Baibars made an in-person pilgrimage to Mecca in 1269, and the Mamluk sultan regarded Abu Numay as a competent ruler. Apparently, Ibn Sab'in had persuaded Abu Numay to declare an allegiance to Al-Manstansir of

¹⁷² **AL-QASIM B. YUSUF AL-SIBTI AL-TUJIBI** (1975) Mustafad Al-rihla wa'il-ighdirab. Tunis, p. 297. Cited by **MORTEL, Richard T.** (1987) Zaydi Shiism and the Hasanid Sharifs of Mecca. In: International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 19, N° 4, pp. 455-472. In p. 461.

¹⁷³ **AL-BADISI** (XIII century). Al-Maqsad Al-sharif, p. 34. Cited by **CASEWIT, Yousef Alexander** (2008) The Objective of Metaphysics in Ibn Sab'in's Answers to the Sicilian Questions. In: Iqbal Review (Pakistan), Vol. 49, N° 2, pp. 1-6.

ABU'L-WAFA AL-TAFTAZANI and LEAMAN, Oliver (1996) Ibn Sab'in. In: History of Islamic Philosophy. Part I, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman. (New York, 1996), pp. 346-366. Citation p. 346.

CORNELL, Vincent J. (1997) The way of the Axial Intellect. The Islamic Hermeticism of Ibn Sab'in. In: Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, Volume XXII, pp. 41-79. Citation p. 47.

COOK, Benamin G. (2012) Ibn Sab'in and Islamic Orthodox: A Reassessmen. In: Journal of Islamic Philosophy, Vol. 8.

Tunis. Ibn Sab'in was not only Al-Qastallani's opponent in Mecca, but also his political rival seeing his influence on the Meccan governor. The hostility of Al-Qastallani¹⁷⁴ was great to Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn Sab'in. Baibars was not euphoric with the activities of Ibn Sab'in in Mecca, and Baibar's forces tried to find the secret place of Ibn Sab'in. However, Ibn Sab'in had hidden in an encampment outside of the city and was waiting for the departure of Baibars. Once Baibar finally left Mecca, Ibn Sab'in was forced to live the secluded life again. Shortly thereafter, Ibn Sab'in heard the news that his son had been captured in Cairo and put in prison¹⁷⁵. Apparently, Al-Qastallani had to leave Mecca because he was made by Baibar Shayk of the Madrasa Al-Kamiliyya in Cairo, a *Dar Al-Hadith* founded in 1229 to defend Sunni Orthodoxy¹⁷⁶. Ibn Sab'in remained in Mecca until his death. The last vestige of the Muwahhid Empire passed away in the year of his death¹⁷⁷. There is a reasonable doubt surrounding his death in 1270.

¹⁷⁴ **KNYSH, Alexander K.** (2000) Ibn Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition, the Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam by Alexander K. Knysh. Review by: Michel Chodkiewicz. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 90, pp. 179-182. In p. 181.

¹⁷⁵ **AKASOY, Anna Ayse** (2006) Philosophie und Mystik in der späten Almohadenzeit. Die Sizilianischen Fragen des Ibn Sab'in. Leiden, p. 32.

HIMMICH, Bensalem (2011) A Muslim Suicide. Syracuse University Press. New York, p. 397.

¹⁷⁶ **POUZET, Louis** (1978) Hadir Ibn Abi Bakr Al-Mihrani: (m. 7 muh. 676/11 juin 1277) sayh du sultan mameouk Al-Malik az-Zahir Baibars. In: *Bulletin d'études orientales*, T. 30, p. 173-183. In p. 183.

AKASOY, Anna (2008) The muhaqq as Mahdi? Ibn Sab'in and Madhism among Andalusian Mystics in the 12th/13th centuries. In: *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*. Herausgegeben von Wolfram Brandes und Felicitas Schmieder. Berlin, pp. 313-338. In p. 327.

¹⁷⁷ **DUNCAN BLACK, Macdonald** (1903) Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory. New York, p. 265.

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It is alleged that he commed suicide¹⁷⁸ like the stoics, that is to say, he opened his veins.

There is even a testament of him¹⁷⁹, in which we learn his works. However, his death is puzzling as Casewit¹⁸⁰ observes:

There are various reports about Ibn Sab'in's death. Some allege that he fled to India where he ended his days¹⁸¹. Ibn Shakir, however, relates in his *Fawat al Wafayat*:
"I heard that Ibn Sab'in committed suicide in Mecca by slitting his wrists¹⁸²."

¹⁷⁸ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1929) Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam, réunis, classés, annotés et publiés. Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, p. 123.

¹⁷⁹ **'ABD AL-RAHMAN BADAWI** (1957) 'Ahd Ibn Sab'in li-talamidihi. In: Revista del Instituto de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, V, Nº 1-2, Sección árabe, pp. 1-103.

ABDURAHMAN BADAWI (1957) Testamento de Ibn Sabín a sus discípulos. In: Revista del Instituto de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, V, Nº 1-2, pp. 249-253.

ABDURAHMAN BADAWI (1965) Rasa'il Ibn Sab'in (Letters of Ibn Sab'in), Cairo.

IBN TAYMIYYAH (1930) Rasa'il wal Masa'il (Letters and Issues), Cairo.

¹⁸⁰ **CASEWIT, Yousef Alexander** (2008) The Objective of Metaphysics in Ibn Sab'in's Answers to the Sicilian Questions. In: Iqbal Review (Pakistan), Vol. 49, Nº 2, pp. 1-6.

¹⁸¹ See Idris 'Azzuzi's *Al Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq: Ara'uhu Al-Islahiyah, Tahqiq wa Dirasa li-Kitabih 'Udat Al-Murid Al-Sadiq*, p. 277. For more biographical information on Ibn Sab'in, see: Ibn Khathir, *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya* Vol. 13, p. 261.

Maktaba Al-Ma'arif. Beirut, 1966.

Kattura, George. (1978) *Budd Al-'arif* (Idol of the Gnostic), Beirut.

Ibn Al-Mulaqan, *Tabaqat Al-Awliya'*, p. 442.

Daral Ma'rifa li Al-Tiba'a wa Al-Nashr, 1986.

Ibn 'Imad Al-Hanbali, *Shadharat ad-Dahanli-Akhbar min Dhahab*, Maktaba Al-Muqaddisi. Cairo, 1940.

¹⁸² Ibn Shakir Al-Kutubi, *Fawat Al-Wafayat*, Vol XXI, p. 517.

Muhyi Al-Din 'Abd Al-Ĥamid, Cairo, 1951.

Regarding his alleged suicide, al Badisi¹⁸³ and some of Ibn Sab'in's disciples report that Ibn Sab'in did not commit this act, rather, he lived out his days as an adviser to Abu Numay Ibn Abi Sa'id, and was poisoned by political enemies. His alleged suicide seems untenable firstly because it was related by one of Ibn Sab'in's foes, and secondly because suicide is wholly contrary to both Islamic law and Ibn Sab'in's philosophical beliefs.

Ibn Sab'in had various enemies. Apart from Abu Bakr Al-Sakuni (d. 649/1251), who was a theologian from Seville living in Tunis, Ibn Sab'in had other enemies. Outb Al-Din al Qastalani obliged Ibn Sab'in to leave Egypt. However, the largest and most dangerous of his enemies was Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), who wrote the book *Al-Siyasa Al-shar'iyya*. He attacked Ibn Sab'in in several of his works. He made treaties refuting the existentialist views, and in particular *the Risalat Al-Furqan bayn Al-Haqq wAl-Batil*, - *the Risalat Al-'Ubudiyya*, *the Risalat Al-Sab'iniyya*, - *Minhaj Al-Sunna Al-Nabawiyya*. Furthermore, he made a treaty to refute the unity of existence¹⁸⁴. However, despite the criticism of Ibn Sab'in and conviction as renegade, Taymiyya considers and recognizes his high intelligence and full philosophical knowledge; he even prefers him to Ibn 'Arabi whose philosophical reputation was vast. Ibn Sab'in is more competent in philosophy than Ibn 'Arabi, whereas, in the field of Kalam, each draws from the same source. He also said that Ibn Sab'in is one of the biggest renegades and one of the most intelligent among them. He knew more than all the Philosophy and Sufism of the philosophers¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸³ Al-Badisi (XIII century). *Al-Maqsad Al-sharif*, p. 34.

¹⁸⁴ **IBN TAYMIYYAH** (1323) *Majmu 'at Al-Rasa'il Al-Kubra*, Cairo.

¹⁸⁵ **'ALIE DAHROUGE** (1983) *Le probleme de l'âme chez Ibn Sab'in. Étude analytique du Budd Al-'Arif*. Thèse pour le Doctorat de 3ème Cycle. Université de Paris I. Pantheon-Sorbonne, pp. 25-28.

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Ibn Sab'in of M. Serefeddin (Turkish book)

The suicide of Ibn Sab'in seems most unlikely, however, because Ibn Sab'in was a pious Muslim who followed the *Shari'ah*, which forbids suicide. All of these views are discussed by A. Al-Taftazani in his book¹⁸⁶. It is true that the last two years of the life of Ibn Sab'in were years of persecutions, and, according to Ibn Taymiyya, he thought to emigrate to India or to the countries of the Magreb¹⁸⁷.

The Almohad dynasty of twelfth century Spain and North Africa patronized the study of Greek philosophy. Works

¹⁸⁶ **ABU'L-WAFA AL-TAFTAZANI** (1973) *Ibn Sab'in wa falsafatuhu'l-shufiyyah* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Lubnānī).

¹⁸⁷ **SPALLINO, Patrizia** (2002) Ibn Sab'in. Le questioni siciliane. Federico II e l'universo filosofico. Palermo, p. 25.

'ALIE DAHROUGE (1983) Le probleme de l'âme chez Ibn Sab'in. Étude analytique du Budd Al-'Arif. Thèse pour le Doctorat de 3ème Cycle. Université de Paris I. Pantheon-Sorbonne, p. 20.

such as Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle, Ibn Tufayl's philosophical novel *Hayy Ibn Yaqzán* and Moses Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, show the personality of this Almohad renaissance, which enormously influenced European thirteenth century scholasticism through the writings of Saint Thomas of Aquinas and others who studied these authors.

The ways in which the soul can be brought into harmony result in happiness. Ibn Sab'in describes the stages of happiness as the "taste of wisdom which is to grasp the realities of things" at the beginning and "the knowledge of God" (*mar'rifat Allah*) and "proximity to the First Truth" at the end¹⁸⁸. We learn from Mushegh Asatrian¹⁸⁹ that «during the reign of the Almohad dynasty, many minor-scale messianic movements occurred, mentioned by Ibn Khaldun, which he regarded as harmful for the state. The impact of messianism and sainthood on the social and religious life of North Africa can be well explicated by the emergence of a number of prominent mystics, such as Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240), Ibn Qasi (d. 1151) and Ibn Sab'in (d.1269-1271). All three originated from Spain, and they taught the doctrine of the cyclical return: prophecy will be followed by caliphate, and then will be followed by kingship, then comes falsehood and tyranny, after which prophecy will be revived with sainthood, to be succeeded in its turn by the Antichrist, who will be overcome by the Messiah

¹⁸⁸ **KATTOURA, George.** (1978) *Budd Al-'arif* (Idol of the Gnostic), Beirut, Lebanon: Dar alAndalus and Dar Al-Kindī, pp. 320-324. Cited by **IBRAHIM KALIN** (2010) *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: MullaSadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*. Oxford, University Press, p. 212.

¹⁸⁹ **ASATRIAN, Mushegh** (2003) *Ibn Khaldún on Magic and the Occult*. In: *Iran & the Caucasus*, Vol 7, No. 1/2 (2003), pp. 73-123. Cited on page 77.

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(*mahdī*). Ibn Khaldun is quite skeptical toward these predictions, saying that they mostly resemble "riddles"».

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, pantheism, which was advocated by Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), Ibn Sab'in, Ibn Farid (d. 577/1181), Al-Hallaj (d. 309/922), and a few others, could not be traced to early Islam in its origin. Pantheism is based upon two wrong principles that are against Islam, Christianity and Judaism¹⁹⁰. Ibn Taymiyyah must have been a very critical biographer of Ibn Sab'in, such as his writings reflect in the Mamu'Fatawa manuscript of Cairo¹⁹¹:

I have been informed by decent people of faith that Ibn Sab'in had the intention to leave Mecca to go to India, because in the lands of Islam there was no place for him.

‘Abd Al-Rahman Badawi in his doctoral dissertation about philosophy in 1944, highlights many discrepancies of the teaching of Ibn Sab'in. Showing some of them, one sees that the disciples of Sab'in, called sab'inies, thought that Ibn Sab'in would be God and Ibn Hud would be Jesus the Liberator. Furthermore, that Ibn Hud (Hasan) would rather see the teaching of Ibn Sab'in than that one of Ibn ‘Arabi.

¹⁹⁰ **HAMID NASEEM RAFIABADI** (2009) *The Intellectual Legacy of Ibn Taymiyyah*, New Delhi, p. 92.

SCHREINER, Martin (1898) Beiträge zur Geschichte der theologischen Bewegungen im Islam, art, In: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 52 Leipzig, pp. 513-563.

¹⁹¹ **AHMAD IBN TAYMIYA**, Mamu'Fatawa, p. 107.

ABDULHAQQ IBN SAB'IN (1965) *Risāla Al-Nuriya in Maḥmu' Rasā'il* (manuscript of the Library Taymuriyya, N° 149, topic «Taṣawwuf», Dār Al-kutub Al-Qawmiyya), critical edition ‘Abd Al-Rahmān Badawī, El Cairo.

Among all mystics, Ibn Sab'in was the most mystic one and the best philosopher¹⁹².

We learn from Madeleine Fletcher¹⁹³ that a negative definition of God was attacked by Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyya (661/1262 – 728/1328) in a fatwa or legal brief which he wrote on Ibn Tumart's murshida. He was motivated to undertake this criticism by his disagreement with the religious thought of a group of Maghribian followers of Ibn Al-Arabi and Ibn Sab'in with whom he was debating in Alexandria. Thus Ibn Taimiyya's fatwa illuminates the clear filiation of thought between Ibn Tumart and Ibn Al-Arabi and Ibn Sab'in as well as showing that in Ibn Taimiyya's mind, there was a link between all three of them and the philosophers. Ibn Khaldun describes similar beliefs propagated by the Western Sufi, such as Ibn Qasi (d.1141), Ibn Al-Arabi (d. 1240), Ibn Sab'in (d. 1240) and his disciple Ibn Abi I-Tawil who all presided that the Mahdi would appear to the Maghreb¹⁹⁴. Musheg Asatrian¹⁹⁵ states in this respecto: «Three originated from Spain, and they taught the doctrine of the cyclical return: prophecy will be followed by caliphate, and then will be followed by kingship, then

¹⁹² **ABDELLAH EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB** (2014) *El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.)*. Doctoral Dissertation of the Universidad Complutense. Madrid, p. 59.

¹⁹³ **FLETCHER, Madeleine** (1991) *The Almohad Tawhíd: Theology which relies on logic*. In: *Numen, International Review for the History of Religions*, Vol. 38 Fasc. 1 (Jun., 1991), pp. 110-127. Cited on pp. 121-122.

¹⁹⁴ **IBN KHALDUN** (1862-1868) *Prolégomènes*, trad. de Slane. Paris, Vol. II, pp. 195-199. Cited by **GARCÍA-ARENAL, Mercedes** (1990) *La conjonction du sufisme et du sharifsme au Maroc: le Mahdi comme sauveur*. In: *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, N° 55-56, pp. 233-256.

¹⁹⁵ **ASATRIAN, Musheg** (2003) *Ibn Khaldun on Magic and the Occult*. In: *Iran & the Caucasus*, Vol. 7, N° 1/2, pp. 73-123. In p. 77.

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comes falsehood and tyranny, after which prophecy will be revived with sainthood, to be succeeded in its turn by the Antichrist, who will be overcome by the Messiah (Mahdi).»

Ibn Taimiyya, writing in 1310, says:

“As for those who are opposed to the prophets like the philosophers and their like, they describe God by negative attributes; they say that God is neither of this way nor of that, nor of another, and they refuse to describe God by positive attributes. Now only nothingness can be described only by a negative. God, according to their description, is thus assimilated to nothingness and no difference remains between what they affirm and nothingness. Nevertheless they say that God exists and that He is not nothingness. Thus they are in contradiction with themselves, since on the one hand they say that God exists, while on the other they deny it¹⁹⁶.”

But who exactly was Ibn Tumart? Isabel O'Connor¹⁹⁷ gives us the answer by means of a brief description of this Berber emperor and his involvement in Andalus:

The Almohad movement, or *Al-Muwahhidun*, had its basis in the religious reform program established by Abu 'Abdulla Muhammad b. Tumart, a Masmuda Berber, who traveled to the Islamic East from 1106 until 1117. Ibn Tumart's emphasis on the oneness of God gave the movement its name. After his return to the Maghrib, Ibn Tumart began to implement his religious reform program aimed at purifying the Islamic practices of the Berbers. He soon came into conflict with the Almoravid rulers and the Maliki school of law which provided the legal foundations of the regime. In 1122 Ibn Tumart proclaimed himself mahdi and in 1124 he moved to the village

¹⁹⁶ **LAOUST, Henri** (1960) Une Fetwa d'Ibn Taimiya sur Ibn Tumart. In: BIFAO LIX (1960), pp. 177-178.

¹⁹⁷ **O'CONNOR, Isabel** (2010) The Fall of the Almohad Empire in the Eyes of Modern Spanish Historians. In: Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Vol. 14, N° 2, pp. 145-162.

of Tinmallal in the High Atlas where the Almohad movement became organized in a tribal form and acquired a political nature. This brought the Almohads into open confrontation with the Almoravids. The Almohad offensive after the death of Ibn Tumart was led by ‘Abdul-Mu’min and his successors who terminated the Almoravid rule in North Africa and conquered Andalus. The Almohads had control of south western Andalus by 1148, but were not able to gain control of eastern Andalus until 1272 due to the opposition of some Muslim leaders, such as Ibn Mardanish.

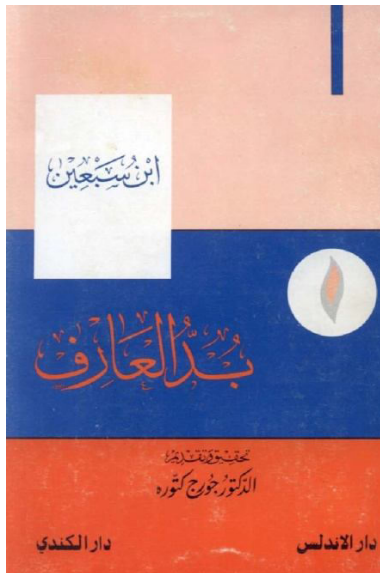
With regards to the Almohad movement, or *Al-Muwahhidun*, it is worthwhile to know that in 1130 a new power arose in North Africa the Muwahhids. Attacking the Muráwids in Morocco and Al-Andalus (1144-5) they practically exterminated them. The Muwahhids ruled Al-Andalus and North Africa for nearly a century. Like the Muráwids, the Muwahhids were Berbers, but they were “far more enlightened and favourable to culture than the Muráwids had been.” During their *régime* some of the greatest names of Arabian culture became world-famous. Among them were Ibn Tufail (d. 1185), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) Musa Ibn Maimun (Maimonides¹⁹⁸), and Ibn Sab’in, all of whom, however, were persecuted on account of their philosophical opinions. The Muwahhids eventually suffered the fate of their predecessors. In 1228, the Hafsids of Tunis claimed their independence, and by 1230 the Christians had driven the Muwahhids from Al-Andalus back to North Africa¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁸ **AKASOY, Anna** (2007) Ibn Sab’in, Maimónides y la emigración andalusi. In: Maimónides y el pensamiento medieval: VIII centenario de la muerte de Maimónides. Actas del IV Congreso Nacional de Filosofía Medieval: Córdoba, 2004. José Luis Cantón Alonso (ed.). Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2007, pp. 113-119.

¹⁹⁹ **FARMER, Henri George** (1929) A history of Arabia Music to the XIII. London, p. 189.

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Coming back to Ibn Taymiyyah, the Sufis who draw strong criticism from him are the ones who expound the doctrine of *wahdat Al-wujud* (pantheism), such as Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240). Sadr Al-Din Al-Qunawí (d. 672/1273), Ibn Sab'in (d. 668/ 1269), and Tilimsáni (d. 690/1291). Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the basic concepts of *wahdat Al-wujud* which they hold in common, indicates the points on which they differ, examines their ideas on rational grounds, and shows their incompatibility with Islamic principles²⁰⁰.



**THE SON OF SEVENTY (1978). Must knower. Published
by Dar Al-Andalus.**

DUNCAN BLACK, Macdonald (1903) Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory. New York, pp. 263-265.

²⁰⁰ **ANSARI, Abdul Haq** (1985) Ibn Taymiyyah and sufism. In: Islamic Studies, Vol. 24, No. 1, Spring, pp. 1-12. In pp. 2-3.

The phrase '*wahdat Al-wujud*' that can have many meanings is often attributed to Ibn 'Arabi, but the understanding of *tawheed* as *wahdat Al-wujud* was actually introduced by Ibn Sab'in²⁰¹. Ibn Sab'in, a Sufi philosopher, is credited with a new religious movement in Islam called *Sab'iniyun*²⁰². Still today relatively little is known about Ibn Sab'in, for most of his forty-one works have disappeared²⁰³.

Sab'in argued for true pantheistic monism in which "there is no real basis to the distinction between the existence of God and of everything else²⁰⁴." According to Sean Butler here we find an important point of disagreement between Arabi and Sab'in. Arabi will admit that non-God entities have ontic status that is distinct from the being of God. Sab'in does not. The name that Sab'in provides for this strict pantheistic monism is '*wahdat Al-wujud*'. It is here that something tricky occurs that demands a little attention. *Wahdat Al-wujud* is, in the use of Sab'in, a monistic pantheism, or, in reference to the two dominant forms of monism in the West, existence monism. This phrase, intended to communicate Sab'in's existence

²⁰¹ **MAYER, Toby** (2008) Theology and Sufism. In: The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 277.

²⁰² **CORBIN, Henry** (1993) History of Islamic Philosophy (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), p. 347.

²⁰³ **ABU'L-WAFA AL-TAFTAZANI and LEAMAN, Oliver** (1996) Ibn Sab'in. In: History of Islamic Philosophy. Part I, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman. (New York, 1996), pp. 346-366. Citation p. 347.

²⁰⁴ **ABU'L-WAFA AL-TAFTAZANI and LEAMAN, Oliver** (1996) Ibn Sab'in, p. 347.

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monism, comes to be understood as the position of Arabi²⁰⁵.

Viewing from an incarnation, visionary, monistic, and absolute monistic perspective, the Muslim Mysticism believes that all religions, terrestrial or celestial, are unified. The reason is that for all of them, the goal is only God. The differences that separate them, especially at ritual level, are merely formal. They only affect the means, but for the purpose, God is One. Plurality reflects only the illusionary, while Oneness is the only truth about man and the world²⁰⁶.

Ibn Sab'in's *wahdat Al-wujud* reveals its Hermetic roots in its doctrinal eclecticism. In his works, he cites Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers as Maimonides (d. 1204). He acknowledges his debt to Abu Nasr Al-Farabi (872-950). He castigates Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198) and the most important unacknowledged figure in Ibn Sab'in's background is Abu 'Ali Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037). He has no kind word for Avicenna either²⁰⁷. Nevertheless, Wasserstrom²⁰⁸ let us know that Ibn Sab'in was beholden

²⁰⁵ **BUTLER, Sean** (2012) Monistic Interpretations of *Tawheed* in the Sufi Notion of *Wahdat Al-wujud*. 2012 Hawaii University International Conferences on Arts and Humanities Conference Proceedings, ISSN-2162-917X, pp. 1-23. Citations pp. 17-18.

²⁰⁶ **SERGUINI, Mohamed** (1992) Monorreligionismo y su significación unicitaria divina en los dos místicos murcianos, Ibn 'Arabi e Ibn Sab'in. In: Los dos Horizontes (Textos sobre Ibn Al'Arabi). Editora regional de Murcia, Murcia, pp. 385-396. In p. 385.

²⁰⁷ **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (2007) The All-Comprehensive Circle (Al-Ihata): Soul, Intellect and the Oneness of Existence in the Doctrine of Ibn Sab'in. In: Sufism and Theology. Edited by Ayman Shihadeh. Edinburgh University Press, pp. 31-48. Citation p. 35.

²⁰⁸ **WASSERSTROM, Steven M.** (1997) The Islamic Social and Cultural Context. In: History of Jewish Philosophy. Routledge History

to the still mysterious *hikma Al-mashriqiya*, the work of which, according to Ibn Sab'in, was "closer to the truth than all the rest".

With reference to the Jews and Muslims interaction, according to Hajebrahimi²⁰⁹ three Muslim philosophers were implicated:

Of all cases about interaction between the Jews and Muslims perhaps none was as fully reciprocal as that which produced the Avicennan philosophical mysticism associated with the idea of Ishraq. Three Muslim philosophers were particularly implicated in the social context of thought, to which Jewish (or Jewish convert) philosophers also seem markedly to have been drawn. These Muslim philosophers, Suhrawardi (d. 1192), Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185), and Ibn Sab'in (d. 1270), were explicitly beholden to the still mysterious Avicenna. These figures were somehow in contact with Jews, for support of which different reasons may exist: Firstly, as is indicated in their biographies, some of these Muslim philosophers both met with Jewish philosophers and initiated Jewish students and there was a reciprocal respect in their relations. Secondly, the writings of Ishraq philosophers were studied for centuries by Jewish philosophers. Thirdly, some Ishraq philosophers studied and sometimes even taught Jewish works.

.....

Ibn Sab'in not only explicitly cited the Ibn Maimon's *Dilaltolha'erin* in his *Risala Al-Nuriyya*, but also taught it to the Muslims and Jews.

There was a type of interconfessionalism in the writings of Ibn Sab'in. In this respect we learn from Cornell²¹⁰ the following:

of World Philosophies. Volume 2, Edited by Daniel H. Fran, Oliver Leaman, pp. 93-114. In p. 100.

²⁰⁹ **H.AJEBRAHIMI, Tahereh** (2013) A Survey on the History of Thoughts Interaction from Philo to Ibn Al-Arabi. In: Research Journal of Recent Sciences, Vol. 2 (11), pp. 76-83. In p. 78.

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In the Sufistic text *Risalat Al-nuriyya* (The Treatise on the Illuminative) a discourse on the epistemology of invocation and remembrance, Ibn Sab'in cites Maimonoides' *Guide for the Perplexed*. In the theurgic invocation *Da'wat Al-Qaf* (Imprecation on the Letter Qaf) he calls on the occult powers (*ruhaniyyat*) of the Jewish angels Metraton and Yabael to overcome his enemies.

However, we have to agree with Michel Chodkiewicz that Ibn Sab'in was thoroughly influenced by the perspective of Ibn al.'Arabí, even if he does not acknowledge this fact in his works²¹¹. Chittick²¹² let us know that of particular interest to us is the fact that in several passages in his work *Risalat Al-nasiha*, also known as *Al-Nuriyya*, Ibn Sab'in employs the term *wahdat Al-wujud* not in passing, but as a specific designation for the fundamental nature of things. In him we find what we did not find in Qunawi and his followers, namely instances in which the term appears to have become a technical expression referring to the worldview of the sages and the friends of God. For example, he writes:

The common people and the ignorant are dominated by the accidental, which is manyness and plurality, while the elect – the men of knowledge – are dominated by the root, which is *wahdat al wujud*. He who remains with the root does not undergo transferral or transformation; he remains fixed in his knowledge and his realization. But he who stays with the branch undergoes

²¹⁰ CORNELL, Vincent J. (2007) The all-Comprehensive Circle (Al-Ihata): Soul, Intellect, and the Oneness of Existence in the Doctrine of Ibn Sab'in. In: *Sufism and Theology*. Edited by Ayman Shihadeh, 31-48. In p. 33.

²¹¹ CHODKIEWICZ, Michel & BALLYANI, Awhad Al-din (1982) *Épître sur l'unicité absolue*, pp. 36-37

²¹² CHITTICK, William C. (1994) Rumi and *Wahdat Al-wujud*. In: *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: The Heritage of Rumi*. Edited by A. Banani, R. Hovannisian, and G. Sabagh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 70-111. Citation pp. 82-83.

transformation and transferal; things become many in his eyes, so he forgets and becomes negligent and ignorant²¹³.



Prof. Dr. William Chittick, the leading translator and interpreter of classical Islamic philosophical and mystical texts.

Al-Badisi informs us that Ibn Sab'in did not commit suicide in Mecca, but ended his days as an adviser to its ruler, the Sharif Abu Numayy Ibn Abi Sa'id (652-701/1254-1301), who may have converted him to Shi'ism²¹⁴. However, the truth about *wahdat Al-wujud* is much more difficult to explain when we take into account the observations of Vincent J. Cornell²¹⁵, who states that:

²¹³ **BADAWI, Abdurrahman** (1965) *Rasa'il Ibn Sab'in*, p. 194.

²¹⁴ **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (1997) *The Way of the Axial Intellect. The Islamic Hermeticism of Ibn Sab'in*. In: *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, Volume XXII, pp. 41-79. Citation p. 47.

²¹⁵ **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (2007) *The All-Comprehensive Circle (Al-Ihata): Soul, Intellect and the Oneness of Existence in the Doctrine of Ibn Sab'in*. In: *Sufism and Theology*. Edited by Ayman Shihadeh. Edinburgh University Press, pp. 31-48. Citation p. 34.

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«... there is yet little evidence that Ibn Al-'Arabi's doctrines were influential in Muslim Spain during Ibn Sab'in's lifetime. Rather, Ibn al-'Arabi seems to have gained his notoriety in the Arab Levant, where he relocated early in his career. Several generations had to elapse before he was fully appreciated in his home region. Even more importantly, Ibn Al-'Arabi never seems to have used the term *wahdat Al-wujud* himself. As William C. Chittick has pointed out, he devotes more attention in his writings to affirming the nature of multiplicity within unity than to affirming the concept of oneness per se. In addition, Ibn Al-'Arabi's students also rarely used the term *wahdat Al-wujud*. For example, Sadr Al-Din Al-Qunawi (d. 673/ 1274), who was one of Ibn Al-'Arabi's closest disciples, mentions the term twice, but does not appear to have regarded it as a major concept. Given this evidence it is difficult to understand why Chittick, following the French Ibn Al-'Arabi specialist Michel Chodkiewicz, still regards Ibn Sab'in as 'thoroughly influenced by the perspective of Ibn Al-'Arabi. Instead, it is more likely that both mystics appropriated the concept of *wahdat Al-wujud* independently, from earlier Sufi or philosophical notions of divine oneness or from hitherto unidentified esoteric traditions that were current in Murcia or the Ricote Valley of Muslim Spain.»

Vincent J. Cornell²¹⁶ upon examining the writings of Ibn Sab'in concludes that he proves to be a much more coherent thinker than most scholars in the Muslim world and the West made him to be. He is best summed up as a Muslim universalist, a Plotinian mystic, and a devotee of Hermes Trismegistus who drew from the wellsprings of both philosophy and Sufism without completely identifying himself with either one.

Ibn Sab'in was highly critical of Aristotelian logic. There was an attack on the Greek logic within the Islamic world coming from the Sufism. Ibn Sab'in accused logicians of analyzing things by breaking them down into their parts,

²¹⁶ **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (1997) The Way of the Axial Intellect. The Islamic Hermeticism of Ibn Sab'in. In: Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, Volume XXII, pp. 41-79. Citation p. 61.

thus violating the basic unity (*tawhid*) of everything in God. Logic implies that it is the parts that are real, whereas from the Sufi point of view it is the whole. Ibn Sab'in ultimately holds out the possibility of a direct, unmediated access to God. In short, the path to God is not the way of discursive reasoning and demonstrative proof, but rather the direct, intuitive, experiential discovery of unity with the divine²¹⁷.

However, there is more criticism on the part of the Valleyricote Sufi. According to Ibn Sab'in, Ghazali appears to be a mystic, a philosopher, an Ash'arite theologian, a jurist, and a perplexed seeker who does not settle on one course. Furthermore Ghazali is weak in his understanding of "anciente" sciences as well as mysticism²¹⁸. In the dissertation of Macksood A. Aftab one finds²¹⁹:

Al-Ghazali is a language without clarity, a voice without words, a madness that combines contradictions, and a confusion that splits the inner parts. One time he is a Sufi, another time a philosopher, and a third time an Asharite, a fourth time jurist, and a fifth time a perplexed man. His achievements in the sciences of the ancients are thinner than a spiders' web, and likewise in Sufism²²⁰.

²¹⁷ **GROFF, Peter S. & LEAMAN, Oliver** (2007) *Islamic Philosophy A-Z*. Edinburg University Press Ltd., Edinburg, pp. 93 and 131.

²¹⁸ **ABDURAHMAN BADAWI** (1965) *Rasa'il Ibn Sab'in* (Letters of Ibn Sab'in), Cairo. Cited by **MOHAMED AHMED SHERIF** (1975) *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*. University of New York Press, New York, p. 19.

²¹⁹ **AFTAB, Macksood A.** (2013) *Historicizing Al-Ghazali and his influence*. Masters Thesis in History of Science. Extension School, Harvard University.

²²⁰ **LANGERMANN, Y. Tzvi** (2009) *Avicenna and His Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers.

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The jurists also merged politic with religion and they were often in opposition to Sufis, in both the religious and political spheres. This can be detected in the words of Ibn Sab'in: "jurists are true to the roots of the Shari'a. However, they digress in issuing fatwas, reasoning merely on the basis of their own desires, and acting differently from what they proclaim²²¹".

The biographers of Ibn Sab'in attribute him a considerable number of works, between treatises, epistles, and dissertations²²², and according to Amari²²³ the most important ones were composed during his stay in the Maghrib. Despite some accessible editions of Ibn Sab'in's major works, there is still a considerable lack of any extensive published studies of his thought, different than Arabic.

The following works are known:

a) In the field of philosophy:

- Budd Al-'arif (Knowledge of the Gnostic)²²⁴: in this work Ibn Sab'in exposes diverse aspects of his

²²¹ **JAHAR, Asep Saepudin** (1999) Abu Ishaq Al-Shatibi's reformulation of the concept of Bida'a: a study of his Al-i'tisam. A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts. Institute of Islamic Studies. McGill University Montreal, Canada, p. 24.

²²² **BROCKELMANN, C.** (1937) *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (Vol. I), (1937), pp. 465-466, Leiden; and Supplementband (Vol.I), (1937), 844-845, Leiden.

²²³ **AMARI, Michele** (1853) *Questions Philosophiques adressées aux savants musulmans, para l'empereur Frédéric II.* In: *Journal asiatique*, 5, number 1, Paris. (Ms. Huntington 534, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford), pp. 240-274.

²²⁴ **KATTOURA, George** (1978) (Editor), *Budd Al-'Arif*, Bayrut.

mystical doctrine that are not in other his books, and he approaches three main topics: the logical science, the intellect and the soul²²⁵.

- Rasa'il (Epistles)²²⁶.
- Risala Al-'ahd (Epistle of the initiation).

b) In the field of the philology:

- Kitab Al-safar (Book of the spiritual trip).
- Lisan Al-falak Al-natiq 'an-wajh Al-haqa'iq (Language of the rational thing from the aspect of the realities).
- Lamha Al-huruf (Seeing the letters).

In another part of the book we have already stated that claims have been made for a Sufi impact upon the Catalan theologian and philosopher Ramón Lull (1232-1316). He himself says that he wrote his *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* (Libre d'amíc e amat) in the manner of the Sufis.

Charles Lohr²²⁷ had studied Ibn Sab'in's *Budd Al-'arif* ("The Baggage of the Gnostic") and the works of Lull. He found that Lull²²⁸ depended on Ibn Sab'in in various cases:

ABU'L-WAFA AL-TAFTAZANI (1983) Nassun gayru Mensur Yeteallaku bi Mebhasi "el-Hadd" min Kitabi Buddu'l-Arif li'bni Seb'in. Dirasat fi'l-Fen ve'l-Felsefe ve'l-Fikri'l-Kavmi, Abdulaziz el-Ehvani Anisina, Daru'l-Kahire li'n-Nesr ve't-Tercume, Misir,

²²⁵ **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su "Budd Al-'arif," Al-Andalus, IX(1944), 371-417.

²²⁶ **AL-RAHMAN BADAWI, A.** (1966) (Editor), Rasa'il, Al-Qahira. Badawi also wrote: **ABDURRAHMAN BADAWI** (1956) Ibn Sab'in y la oración mental. In: Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios islámicos, Nº 4, 1-2, pp. 131-135.

ABDURRAHMAN BADAWI (1967) Les points de rencontre de la mystique musulmane et de L'Existentialisme. In: Studia Islamica, Nº 27, pp. 55-76.

²²⁷ **LOHR, Charles** (2000) The Arabic background to Ramon Lull's Liber Chaos" (Ca. 1285) In: Traditio, Vol. 55, pp. 159-170.

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Lull's dependence on Ibn Sab'in appears clearly in the inclusion in his *Logica nova*, not of four questions as in Aristotle, but of nine fundamental questions: *utrum, quid, de quo, quare, quantum, quale, quando, ubi, quo modo, cum quo*. The source for these questions is without doubt the treatment of nine basic questions found at the beginning of the logic of the *Budd Al-'arif*. Both Ibn Sab'in and Lull meant these questions to serve in the philosophic descent from universals to the particular, individual things treated in an art." The same interest in bridging the gap between universal things and the particular may be found in Lull's doctrine of nine cosmic subjects, which Lull found in his Sufi sources. In his *Ars inventiva* Lull introduced, in connection with the doctrine of three degrees of knowledge, the following list: God, angels, celestial matter, man, things of the imagination, animals, plants, the four elements (and all instruments). Ibn Sab'in, at the beginning of his section on the technical terms of the philosophers in the logic of the *Budd Al-'arif*, divides existents into universal and particular things and defines the universal things as comprising the nine unities: God, intellect, soul, nature, matter, matter in three dimensions, the celestial spheres, the four elements, and the natural things of this world. This list is presented as a means of ascending from the particular things of this world to the nine universal things or of descending from these universals to the particulars. Ibn Sab'in, following up on his enumeration of the nine unities, explains:

These are the nine universals, in which one descends by dissolution from the highest to the lowest, or to which one gradually ascends from particular things as to the highest and most important.

As an example of this ascent he shows how one may rise from stone to plant, from there to animal nature, then to rational soul, and thus by way of the active intellect to the separate

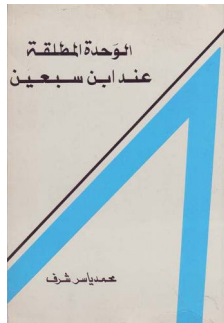
LOHR, Charles (1989) Islamic influences in Lull's Logic. In: *Estudi General* 9. Barcelona, pp. 147-157.

²²⁸ **URVOY, Dominique and URVOY, Marie Thérèse** (1980) *Penser l'Islam. Les présupposés islamiques de l'art de Lull*, Vrin, Paris.

intellect an ascent paralleled by Lull in his *De ascensu et descansa intellectus* (1305).

Certain influence is coming from Ibn Sab'in, although Cruz Hernández thinks more in a global influence of Islamic thought on Lull. Akasoy and Fidora have another opinion²²⁹:

Akasoy and Fidora agree with Cruz Hernández in minimizing Ibn Sab'in's influence on Lull's logic and see a more likely influence by Al-Ghazali and the Ikhwan Al-Safa. However, contrary to Cruz Hernández, they consider that the question of specific influences should be addressed, since the parallels with Lull are too close to be explained only by a common milieu.



MOHAMMED YASSER SHARAF (without year).
Absolute unity when by son of seventy.

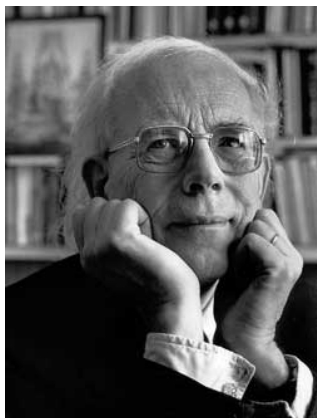
²²⁹ **AKASOY, Anna and FIDORA, Alexander** (2008) Ibn Sab'in and Raimundus Lullus: The Question of the Arabic Sources of Lullus' Logic Revisited. In: Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in text, transmission and translation, in honour of Hans Daiber. Eds. Anna Akasoy and Wim Raven, Leiden: Brill, pp. 433-458.

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MOHAMED IDRISSE ADLOUNI (1998).
Unity in the philosophy of mysticism; son of seventy.
Publisher House of Culture. (Arabic).

Perceptions of Other Religions in the Sufism of Ibn Sab'in.



Professor Emeritus of Old Testament of History of the Religions of the University of Lausanne, Carl Albert Keller (1920-2008) is the author of many works in the field of mystic. As for Ibn Sab'in, let us see the work of this Professor. In the website academia.org one can freely find a book with the full text and references²³⁰.

Carl Albert Keller

Ibn Sab'in (1216/7–1270) is, within the broad stream of Sufi thought and practice, the leading representative of absolute monism²³¹. In his writings, the exclamation “God alone!” (*Allahu faqat!*) is an ever-recurring refrain. God alone *is*, He alone, the ONE in His uniqueness, and everything else is but the product of imagination and a mental construct (*wahm*). Nevertheless, this uncompromising monist also defends the necessity of true Revelation, in particular of the Revelation, which was accorded to Muhammad. In the *Risalat anwar Al-Nabi* he

²³⁰ **KELLER, Carl A.** (1999) Perceptions of Other Religions in Sufism. In: Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey. Edition of Jacques Waardenburg. New York, London, pp. 181-194. In pp. 190-192.

²³¹ **ABDARRAHMAN BADAWI** (1965) *Rasa'il Ibn Sab'in*, Cairo.

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embarks on a most enthusiastic description of the “lights” that distinguish the Prophet. Already his birth announced the downfall of foreign religions: cosmic cataclysms surrounded the event; moreover, the sacred fire of the Zoroastrians was quenched and the palace of the Persian Emperor torn asunder, whereas the idols of the Hindus trembled. After having adduced numerous proofs for the outstanding and incomparable greatness of Muhammad, Ibn Sab'in exhorts the Jews and the Christians to acknowledge this compelling evidence for Muhammad's uniqueness. In another context, though, he admits that ancient religions prepared the way for the ultimate Revelation granted to Muhammad, explaining that all religions are but paths leading up to Islam:

None of the outstanding qualities of this our religion has been heard of as accorded to more ancient religions, and nothing of the sort has been reported about them. The sciences of ancient religions have traced the ways toward our religion. As to their distant and near-by causes, including all the sciences of the nations, the sects and the religions, time and divine providence have handed them over to them.

There is, then, a positive link between God and all religions, but solely as announcements of the full Revelation to come. In his great study of the glories and wonders of making memory of God (*dhikr*): *Risalat Al-naṣiḥa wa-l-nuriyya*, Ibn Sab'in exploits this idea in several passages and in various ways. Stating that God has “tied” the practice of *dhikr* to all religions, he expounds this point by quoting in turn, “one of the books that are descended from heaven,” Christian monks, and the author of *Dalalat Al-ḥa 'irin* (The guide of the perplexed)—that is, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), and “a Rabbi”. Later, he mentions Hindus, Black people, Christians, and astrologers, and again, examining the symbolism of light, he offers comments about philosophers, Zoroastrians,

Brahmins, Jews, and Christians. Overviews of this kind where various religions are alluded to in a certain order are rather typical of this treatise on *dhikr*.

Although it seems, then, that our monist had some knowledge of non-Islamic religions, nothing is farther from the truth. It is true that Ibn Sab'in quotes some evidence, but such evidence is mostly apocryphal or even fanciful. It is nothing more than what was certainly current talk among Muslims about religions other than Islam. Take, for instance, what he says about the religious practice, that is the *dhikr*, of Black people:

When the Black people want to take on a beautiful appearance, they write the names of God on their faces, the names that they have inherited from their forebears. Here they are altogether: "Yashi, Fashi, Yaryarjik, Sha'sha'," which means "all enemies flee before the one who makes memory (*dhikr*) of God. The anger of God becomes powerful and shall not be overcome."

His information about the *dhikr* of the Hindus does not strike the reader with greater plausibility, although it betrays some acquaintance with Hindu theology, especially with the problem of the relationship between God and the "soul" or the "Self" (*atman*):

When the Hindus decide to build a temple, they must recite the names which I shall quote, and place them on the site of the building: "*Wahin*, Idol of eternity, *Awḥadan*, *Harshan*, *Awraḥsan*," which means: "O Thou because of whom the obedient one has burnt his skin and is heading towards some of his creatures! Grant us your favor by a breath from you which circulates in us and decides about the states of our spirits! O Thou, Origin of everything that has origin! O idol of its meaning by whom things exist and who by his being is in everything!"

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Our author mentions several times the Hindu priestly caste, the Brahmins:

Whenever light is mentioned among them, the Brahmins prostrate themselves immediately. They utter words whose meaning would be, after "In the Name of God the Merciful, the All-Merciful, and may God pray over our Master and Teacher Muhammad and his family": "You! You! You! You are exalted, Lord of Lords!"

If the religions of India are not, for Ibn Sab'in, the object of much research, he can speak with more authority about the Zoroastrians. He mentions them only once, but he is aware of the essence of their theology: "They apply the symbol of light to God and to pure Goodness".

As to Ibn Sab'in's information about the Jews, we have already mentioned the remarkable fact that he quotes the author of *Dalalat Al-ḥa'irin*, that is, Maimonides, whom he has perhaps read. However, the statement, which purports to be authored by this Jewish authority, is rather astonishing:

"God has revealed His Wisdom on Tuesday to Moses, and His Word on Thursday" (p. 157). I appeal to specialists in Maimonidean studies to trace this saying to Maimonides' work. Ibn Sab'in is aware of the existence of the Jews' "Ten Words":

Concerning the *dhikr* of God, the most exalted thing which comes from the Jews is this: the Ten Words whose contents do not contradict the meaning of the *Verse of the Throne* (Qur'an 2: 255), nor the conclusion of the Surat Al-Ha sr (S. 59) concerning disagreements among them. In contrast, he is not very far from the target when he interprets the symbolism of light in the Jewish Scriptures:

“With the Jews, the light is, whenever it is mentioned in the Torah, the World of angels, the Presence of God and His attributes”.

He is also fond of stories about Rabbis:

A Rabbi was told to adore his Master. He said: “That is the very thing I have done just now!” Later on, he was given the same order. He replied: “I have done that just now!” People wondered: “How is that possible? You are a liar!” The Rabbi explained: “I make memory of Him. He behaves with me in such a way that it is possible for me to attain under all circumstances the state of making memory of Him!”

Christianity is a religion that Ibn Sab'in mentions rather often in his treatise on *dhikr*. The reader cannot escape the impression that in his time, stories about monks, very popular in the early stages of Sufi piety, were still handed on in Sufi circles:

A monk cried out for help. Somebody wanted to know why. He said: “I have been practicing *dhikr*, but time and again I have stopped uttering the formula, being unable to do it without interruption. But negligence in pronouncing the Name of God entails frightful separation from God (*hurma*), so I suffer from being excluded (*maḥrum*) from communion with God. Now I take refuge in God from what happened today.”

Somebody asked a monk: “Do you observe fasting?” He replied: “My fast is nothing else but making memory of God. As soon as I make memory of something else, I am breaking the fast.”

This “permanent *dhikr*” ascribed to the monks betrays perhaps some knowledge of the Christian “prayer in the heart,” often practiced by the monks, a prayer which aims at permanent invocation of the Name of Jesus. Some information about that practice may also transpire in one

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of the “quotations” from the Gospels with which Ibn Sab'in props up his theory of universal *dhikr*:

“In the Gospel it is said: The breath of the believer is the place of *dhikr*, and the place of *dhikr* is my Presence”.

This saying reminds one of the well-known use of respiration in the practice of the prayer of Jesus in the heart. That prayer, the specific invocation of the Name of Jesus developed by Christian monks, can indeed be thought of as a kind of *dhikr*:

“The Gospel says: There is no good in a servant who does not make memory (*dhikr*) of me!”.

If these “quotations” can hardly be discovered in the Gospels (at any rate not in the canonical ones), some other items reveal more adequate information about Christianity. Take this exhortation which God is said to have addressed to Jesus:

“O Jesus, make memory of me as a child makes memory of his father!”

Here, the Christian message of the fatherhood of God seems to be echoed. Moreover, while describing the religion of the companions of Christ as “*dhikr*, traveling, living a lonely life, fasting, paying attention to divine voices, to associations and divine illuminations”, our author adds:

“This is nowadays the habit (the *sunna*) of the monks.”

He also has some vague knowledge about Christ's last supper and the Christian eucharist:

In the Gospel is found the praise of John, and the Word of Christ which he said in the night. The gist of what was understood is summed up in some words that I am going to quote. I only hint at them, without suggesting that the one who utters them can benefit from them ...

What follows is a long range of letters, which are totally unintelligible although they are supposedly a reflection of the Syriac liturgy (and although, according to our author, Abu Ṭalib Al-Makki offers somewhere a similar list). Fearing perhaps that an obscure formula like the one he has given might be used for magical purposes, Ibn Sab'in opines:

The best attitude in these matters is, I think, to be wary of what one hears from Jews and Christians, as we are taught in our tradition. An exception might be allowed for pious men (*rijal*) who transmit things about other pious men and their experiences (*aḥwal*). [That seems to mean: if there exists a kind of Jewish and Christian science of *ḥadith*.]

Our author is of course aware of the fact that the Pope governs most Christians. But he has strange things to say about the *dhikr* of that man whom he describes as a kind of adept of Pentecostalism:

As to the Christians, their Pope has not his position assured as long as he does not make memory of his Lord, first in human language, then in divine language (i.e., speaking in tongues?). The Pope makes memory of the Lord in his human language until he becomes absent in God (*ghaiba*). Then he employs divine language until he is overcome with something like madness. He makes memory of God by mentioning Persons, which is an attribute of God.

“Persons” (*uqnumiyya*) as an attribute of God is of course a correct reminiscence of Christian trinitarian theology, quite surprising as a statement coming from a Muslim. But

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there is only one other passage where Ibn Sab'in offers some more detailed information about Christian theology:

With the Christians, the light is used as metonymy for the Godhead, and most particularly for Jesus. He is the light which God has sent down on earth [we are reminded of the Gospel of St. John, ch. 1, v. 4–13]. He [God] is one in substance and diverse in speech and shape. The contrary is true when His much honoured appearance manifests itself [i.e., perhaps: the incarnate Jesus is one in speech and shape, but diverse—God and man—in substance?]. One can say in a general way that there are five schools of Christian theology (*madhhab*), the outstanding among them being close to philosophy. All of them talk about the light and magnify it. Others besides these five are worth nothing and to talk about them serves neither the learned nor the Muslims.

In this passage Ibn Sab'in indeed betrays some concrete knowledge of Christianity, although it is not easy to identify his “five schools” of Christian theology. Our author, founder of a Sufi school of thought, is interesting in that he allows some glimpses of the views educated Muslims of his time entertained about religions outside the fold of Islam. He is also quite praiseworthy in that he tried to illustrate the themes of “light” and *dhikr* with examples from other religious traditions, but he has never made an effort to understand those traditions properly and to offer an interpretation which would give them more than the status of provisional and queer arrangements, destined to be abandoned in favor of Islam. In his mind, religions are nothing more than bizarre fantasies, although they are in some mysterious way related to God.



ATIF SAMIH ZEIN (1988).
Son of seventy. Publisher Global Business Book.

We may add that an unknown disciple of his, commenting on the Agreement (*'ahd*) the master made with his followers, develops a brilliant demonstration to the effect that religions are but “mental constructs” (*wahm*) or “quaint conceits” (*nukat*) whose function it is to lead people on the way to God, away from vanity. The final purpose is, of course, experience of the one God, beyond even the construct of the religion of Islam. For outside the absolute unity of the one God, everything is but the product of imagination.

Professor Dr. Serajul Haque (1902-2005) was one of the foremost Arabic scholars of East Pakistan. He wrote in 1937 a thesis titled “Imam Ibn Taimiyah and his Project of Reform”. With regards to the Batiniyyah movement, Haque observes²³²:

²³² **HAQUE, Serajul** (2004) Theologico-Philosophical thought, chapter 41. A History of Muslim Philosophy. Volume II, Book Four. Later centuries. Edited and introduced by M.M. Sharif. Pakistan Philosophical Congress, pp. 796-818.

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Sufis like Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Sab'in, Al-Qunawi, Tilimsiini, etc., followed these heretical views of the Batiniyyah and used Islamic terms in naming their theories. Some of these Sufis, namely, Ibn Sab'in and his followers, did not distinguish between Islam and other religions like Christianity and Judaism. Followers of any religion could approach them and become their disciples without changing their faith.

The form of Sab'iniyyun (Sabinyya) survived up to the time of Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328). The pantheism²³³ of Ibn Sab'in, based on the concept of *wahdat Al-wujud* caused much critic from Taymiyyah²³⁴.



**ABU MUHAMMAD BIN ABDUL HAQ SEVENTY MURSI
ANDEAN (20005).**

**Messages son seventy. Translated by Abdel Rahman Badawi.
Publisher: House and Library Bebleon. (Arabic).**

²³³ **BADAWI, Abdurrahman** (1958 [1960]). El panteismo integral de Ibn Sab'in. In: Revista del Instituto de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid. Vol. VI, Fasc. 1-2, pp. 103-108.

²³⁴ **LEAMAN, Oliver** (2000) Encyclopaedia of Asian Philosophy, pp. 249-251.

Doctoral Dissertations about Ibn Sab'in

Year	Author	Doctoral Dissertation	Country
1942	Lator, Esteban	Die Logik des Ibn Sab'in aus Murcia. University of Munich	Germany
1961	Al-Taftazani	Ibn Sabín was-falsafatuh Al-sufiyya (Cairo University)	Egypt
1977	Kattoura, George	Das Mystische und Philosophische System des Ibn Sab'in Unpublished thesis, University of Tübingen	Germany
1983	'Ali Dahrouge	Le probleme de l'âme chez Ibn Sab'in. Étude analytique du Budd Al-'Arif. University de Paris I	France
1986	Serghini Mohamed	L'expose critique de la pensée musulmane a travers Ibn Sab'in University de Paris IV	France
2005	Akasoy, Anne	Philosophie und Mystik in der späten Almohadenzeit. Die Sizilianischen Fragen des Ibn Sab'in. Goethe University – Frankfurt am Main	Germany
2008	Birgöl Bozkurt	Ibn Seb'in'in metodu hakkında ayrıca bkz. Birgöl Bozkurt. Ibn Seb'in'in Hayati, Eserleri ve Felsefi Görüşleri, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, AÜSBE, Ankara. Unpublished thesis.	Turkey
2014	Abdellah El Moussaoui Taib	El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sab'in, (s. VII-XIII d.C.) Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Spain
2002	Ahmad Fadhil	Konsep Al-Tahqiq dalam Budd Al-Arif Ibn Sab'in Perpustakaan Universitas	Indonesia

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Manuscripts of Ibn Sab'in

N°	Manuscript title	Library / Town	Country
1	Budd Al-'Arif	Constantinopla Yarullah, N° 1273 - Istanbul	Turkey
1	Budd Al-'Arif	Bagdadi Wahbi Afendi, N° 833 – Istanbul	Turkey
1	Budd Al-'Arif	Berlin, N° 1744 (Cat. Ahlwardt)	Germany
1	Aywiba Yamaniyya 'an Masa'il Siqilliya	Biblioteca Bodleiana Oxford, N° 1456	Great Britain
1	Risalat Al-Fath Al-Mustarak	Maymu Rasa'il of Ibn Sab'in - Cairo	Egypt
1	Risalat Al-Fath Al-Mustarak	Bursa	Turkey
1	Al-Risala Al-Qawsiyya?	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Risala Al-Ihata		
1	Risalat Al-Alwah aw Jitab allah		
1	Risalat Al-Qist	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Risalat fi 'Arafa	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Al-Risalat Al-Hikamiyya		
1	Al-Risala Al-Asbu'iyya		
1	Risalat Natiyat Al-Hukm	Non-existent	
1	Risalat bay'at Al-hafsyin		
1	Epistle	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Epistle II	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Epistle III	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Kitab al Baht	Non-existent	
1	Kitab Al-Kabir	Non-existent	
1	Kitab Al-kadd	Non-existent	
1	Risalat Al-Tawayyuh		
1	Poetic Diwa		

2	Kitab Al-‘Ahd		Egypt
2	Al-Risala Al-Nuriyya o Risala Al-nasiha		Egypt
2	Kalam li-Ibn Sab’in		Egypt
2	Kitab Al-qawsiyya		Egypt
2	Khitab Allah bi- lisan nurihi		Egypt
2	Kitab Al-alwah		Egypt
2	Al-Fath Al-mushtarak		
2	Kalamuhu fi ‘Arafa		
2	Kitab Al-ihata		
2	Miftah budd Al-‘arif	Bursa	Turkey
2	Kitab Al-darj ²³⁵ Al-Huruf Al-wad’lyya fi’l-suwar Al-falakiyya	Dar Al-Kutub Al- Misriyya MS 202	Cairo
1	Al-Risala Al-Faqiriyya	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Al-Risala Al-Ridwaniyya	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Kitab as-Safar	Non-existent	
1	Hizbu Al-Fath wal-nur	Non-existent	
1	Hizbu Al-faray wal-Istijla bi-sirri tahqiqi kalimati Al-ijlas	Non-existent	
1,2	Da’wat li-harf Al- qaf wal-nun	MS Staatsbibliothek Berlin, N° 3654	Germany
1	Sermon I	Cairo manuscript	Egypt

²³⁵ Or *Kitab Al-Daraj*. Cfr. **KING, David A.** (1990) A Survey of Medieval Islamic Shadow Schemes or Simple Time-Reckoning. In: *Oriens*, Vol. 32, pp. 191-249. In pp. 219-220.

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1	Sermon II	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Sermon III	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Sermon IV	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Sermon V	Cairo manuscript	Egypt
1	Sermon VI		
1	Kitab ad-duray		
2	Kitab Al-Durratu Al-Mudi'a wal- hafiyyat Al-shamsiyya	Rabat, N° 471	Morocco
1,2	Lisan Al-Falak Al-Natiq 'an wayhi Al-haqa'iq	Library Asaf, N° I, 802, 109	Egypt
1	Risala fi asrari Al-kawakibi wAl- durayi wAl-buruy	Manuscript lost, before in: Municipal Library of Alexandria	Egypt
1,2	Sarh Kitab Idris	Cannot be located	
1	Lamhat Al-Huruf		
1	Tasawwuf Taymur, N° 149 Al-Jhatah	Dar Al-Kutub Al-Misriyya – Cairo	Egypt
2	Hizb Ibn Sab'in	Dar Al-Kutub Al-Misriyya – Cairo	Egypt
	A qasidah in the MS The Diwan ²³⁶ , in MS Carullah 1279, ols. 102a-136a	Istanbul	Turkey

- (1) Information taken from: **EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah** (2014). El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sab'in, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Tesis doctoral. Facultad de Filosofía. Departamento de Filosofía III (Hermenéutica y Filosofía

²³⁶ **DUNLOP, D.M.** (1952) The Diwan attributed to Ibn Bajjah (Avempace). In: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 14, N° 3, Studies Presented to Vladimir Minorsky by His Colleagues and Friends, pp. 463-477. In p. 464.

de la Historia. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, pp. 355-356.

(2)

- (3) Information taken from: **CORNELL, Vincent J.** (1997). The way of the Axial Intellect. The Islamic Hermetism of Ibn Sab'in. In: Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, Volume XXII, pp. 41-79. Citation pp. 53-54.

According to Ahmad Taymur²³⁷ and Henry George Farmer²³⁸, with reference to Ibn Sab'in during the Muwahhid period, they owe a discussion of related musical notes called *Kitab Al-Adwar Al-Mansub*, of which a solitary copy is preserved in Cairo. However, this work was not written by Ibn Sab'in but by Safiy Al-din 'Abd Al-Mumin²³⁹.

Dr. Ömer Bozkurt of the Çankiri Karatekin University at Ankara gives in his article²⁴⁰ about Ibn Sab'in a long list of all his works. Unfortunately, his article is written in Turkish, a language that we do not dominate. No doubt that we have to take into account his work for completing the list of all the works of Ibn Sab'in. Dr. Birgül Bozkurt wrote in 2008 a doctoral thesis about Ibn Sab'in at the

²³⁷ Ahmad Taymur in *Al-Hilāl*, vol. xxviii (1919), p. 214. Cited by **HITTI, Philip K.** (1956) History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present. MacMillan and Company Limited. London, Sixth Edition, p. 599.

²³⁸ **FARMER, Henry George** (1929) A history of Arabian music. London, p. 226.

²³⁹ **EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah** (2014) El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Tesis doctoral. Facultad de Filosofía. Departamento de Filosofía III (Hermenéutica y Filosofía de la Historia. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, p. 102.

FARMER, Henry George (1946) "Ghosts". An Excursus on Arabic Musical Bibliographies. In: Isis, Vol. 36, Nº 2, pp. 123-130. In p. 125.

²⁴⁰ **BOZKURT, Ömer** (2008) Ibn Seb'in ve hakkında yapılan çalismalar. In: Istem, Yil: 7, Sayr: 14, pp. 191-206.

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Ankara University²⁴¹. Strange enough the articles of
Abdulbak Baykara²⁴² do not figure in mentioned thesis.



Miniature from the *Electorum parvum seu Breviculum*
www.digitalhumanities.org

Ibn Sab'in and Al-'Arabi represented the peak of Andalusian Sufism. Growing up in the Iberian Peninsula, where the forces of Christianity were moving southward and where the Almohads were a major presence, this was a

²⁴¹ **BOZKURT, Birgül** (2008) Ibn Seb'in'in metodu hakkında ayrıca bkz. Birgül Bozkurt. Ibn Seb'in'in Hayati, Eserleri ve Felsefi Görüşleri, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, AÜSBE, Ankara. Unpublished thesis.

²⁴² **BAYKARA, Abdulbaki** (1928) Dârulfunun İlahiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası, Tarihi, İctimâî, Dinî, Felsefî, Üçüncü sene, onuncu sayı, Teşrin-i evvel 1928, Şehzadeaşı Evkaf Matbaası, 1928, pp.65-89.
BAYKARA, Abdulbaki (Year unknown) İbni Seb'in: [Yenikapı Mevlevîhanesi son şeyhi] ... Nihad Çetin anısına çıkan Şarkiyat Mecmuasının VIII. sayısında yayımlandı, pp.131-153.

turbulent period. What is immediately apparent is that Ibn Sab'in and Ibn Al-'Arabi did not belong to a particular group or circle, but tried to find their own spiritual path within the multitude of possibilities available to him. The Andalusian Sufis were not the same as those in the East, but lived individual, spiritual lives. This individuality is clearly part of this Western milieu and crosses religious boundaries. Ibn Sab'in and Ibn 'Arabi follow the model of a master with disciples, as does his contemporary Ramon Llull, a Christian mystic and missionary. All three wrote many works, were itinerant, and borrowed from diverse religious traditions.

Most European studies do not refer to Turkey, but also in Turkey²⁴³ researchers made advances on the knowledge of Ibn Sab'in. The same can be said of studies of Ibn Sab'in in Egypt²⁴⁴, Irak, but they exist²⁴⁵.

²⁴³ **GÖLPINARLI, Abdülbaki** (1928) Ibn Seb'in, Daru'l-Fünun lahiyat Fak. Mecmuasi, st. sy. X.

BOZKURT, Birgül (2009) Enduluslu filozof-sufi Ibn Seb'in'e gore hakikati arayanlar. In: Istem, Yıl:7, Sayı: 14, pp. 283-309.

BOZKURT, Birgül (2008) Ibn Seb'in'in Hayati, Ilmi Kisiligi ve Eserleri, CUIF Dergisi, Sivas, XII/2, pp. 347-380.

BOZKURT, Birgül (2010) Abdalbaki Golpinarli. Trskp. Ve Sad.: Ibn Seb'in. In: Toplum Bilimleri. Haziran, 4 (7), pp. 293-312.

KUTLUER, İlhan (1999) Ibn Seb'in. Sufi filozof. Madd., İslam Ansiklopedisi, TDV, İst., pp. 306-312.

KARLIGA, Bekir (1995) Miftahu Buddu'l-Arif. In: İslam Tetkikleri Dergisi (Review of Islamic studies). CILD Volume: IX. Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, İstanbul, pp. 303-343.

²⁴⁴ **IBN SAB'IN** (1956) Resailu Ibn Seb'in, Tahkik: Abdurrahman Bedevî, Daru'l Mısıryye li't-Te'lif ve't-Tercume, Cairo.

²⁴⁵ **MUHAMMED YASIR SEREF** (1981) Felsefetu'l-Vahdeti'l-Mutlaka inde Ibn Seb'in. Daru'r-Resid li'n-Nesr, Bagdad, pp. 115-116, 161, 207-214.

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Hermitage “Nuestra Señora de las Huertas” in Ricote (Sixteenth century)

5. Disciples of Ibn Sab'in

Al-Shushtari

The disciple or spiritual disciple of Ibn Sab'in, the poet Al-Shushtari²⁴⁶, who spoke of himself as his slave and dedicated three of his *zadjals* to him, called him "the magnet of souls" (*maghnalis Al-nufus*). Al-Shushari began to travel as a preacher and musician going from fair to fair dancing and singing his verses.

Balyani's probable historical connections with the "monist" Sufi school of Ibn Sab'in and Al-Shushtari, drawn from discussions by Ibn Taymîya and other later sources, should be taken into account²⁴⁷.

Henry Corbin²⁴⁸ in his *History of Islamic Philosophy* refers to Louis Massignon when he mentions the work of Al-Shushtari:

One of his poems speaks of the *isnad*, the spiritual genealogy which the *Sab'Iniyun* attributed to themselves. Not only does it include the names of Al-Suhrawardi and Ibn Al-'Arabi but, in

²⁴⁶ **MASSIGNON, Louis** (1950) *Recherches sur Shushtari, poète andalou enterré à Damiette*. In: *Mélanges offerts à William Marçais*: Paris, Éditions G.P. Maisonneuve, pp. 253-276.

URVOY, Dominique, and URVOY Marie Thérèse (1976) *Les thèmes chrétiens chez Ibn Sab'in et la question de la spécificité de sa pensée*. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 44, pp. 99-121.

²⁴⁷ **CHODKIEWICZ, Michel & BALLYANI, Awhad Al-din** (1982) *Epître sur l'unicité absolue*, pp. 17-41.

²⁴⁸ **CORBIN, Henry** (1993) *History of Islamic Philosophy*. Translated by Liadain Sherrard with the assistance of Philip Sherrard. Kegan Paul International, New York in association with Islamic Publications for the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, p. 264.

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common with Al-Suhrawardi, they claim to be spiritually descended from Hermes, and in this way the school of Ibn Sab'in reveals affinities with the tendencies of the *ishraqiyyun*.



Al-Shushtari
Photo: Luispihormiguero

Shushtari, who was born in Guadix c. 1212 and died in Damietta in 1269, offers a good example of poetry in the Sufi manner. Shushtari, after beginning as a jongleur of the type of Ibn Guzmán, took vows of poverty and sang his *muwassahas* in the market-place to the lowest classes of the people²⁴⁹.

Abu Al-Hasan 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah Al-Numayri Al-Shushtari Al Lusi was related to the village of Shushtar outside Guadix, near Granada, in 1212. Ibn Liyon Al Tayibi (1346) let us know that Al-Shushtari "was emir and

²⁴⁹ **BRENAN, Gerard** (1951) *The Literature of the Spanish People: From the Roman Times to the Present Day*. Cambridge at the University Press, p. 107.

child of emirs and he became poor and child of poor²⁵⁰„. Al-Shushtari's family members were well-to-do believers, and he studied the normal Andalusí curriculum: Quran and hadith, Arabic and Andalusí literature, as well as as *fiqh* (jurisprudence). He seems to have lived in both Malaga and Granada, before travelling to North Africa as a merchant. He met and studied with several disciples of Abu Madyan (d. 1197), as well as those of Abu Ḥafṣ 'Umar -Al-Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234).

His first spiritual journey was to Bougie, where he was received by the qadi Muhyiddin Ibn Suraqa, a disciple of Al Suhrawardi. Strange enough, once he left Bougie he desired to return to it and this time he put himself in contact with another mystic circle, the Madaniya of Ibn Mayan. This was his second spiritual travel. Al Shushari was enchanted by the tariqa of the famous mystic Abu Madyan (from Seville). Therefore, he took the decision to break definitively with his past and his family, abandoning trade. From that time he qualifies himself as "Madani".

However, later on in 646/1248, his enchantment turned into deep confusion upon talking to yet another mystic and philosopher: the legendary Ibn Sab'in (from Murcia). Having finished the talk Al-Shushtari prepared to leave, and Ibn Sab'in asked him where he was going. He replied that he would watch the followers of Abu Madyan. Then Ibn Sab'in uttered the cry to Al-Shushtari: "If you are looking for Paradise go with Abu Madyan, but if you wish to approach the Lord of Paradise follow me."

²⁵⁰ **EL NASHAR, Ali Sami** (1953) Abul Hasan Al Sustari místico andaluz y autor de zéjeles y su influencia en el mundo musulmán. In: Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos. Número especial, Primer año, Nº 1, pp. 122-155. In p. 131.

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This exclamation brought Al-Shushtari in a state of absolute spiritual unconsciousness. When he awoke, he was completely captivated by Ibn Sab'in. This Al-Shushtari expresses in his "muwassaha", sent later to Ibn Sab'in at Mecca. One can say that Al-Shushtari was completely diluted in Ibn Sab'in, and his poetry is full of it. Even though he was younger, he had given himself the nickname of slave of Ibn Sab'in. Also, he called himself the Sabini. This was the last spiritual journey of Al-Shushtari. As from that time, Al-Shushtari dressed himself in the initiation clothes and undertook a period of traveling, together with his Master or with a mystic group, which took him from one fair to another in which he danced and sang²⁵¹.

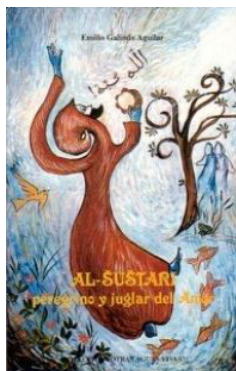
He visited Fez, Mequinez and a hermit of Gabse. Thereafter, he visited the town Tripoli. Al-Shushtari's spiritual accomplishments and wisdom did not go unnoticed. He was invited by the authorities of Tripoli to become a judge (qadi), which would have been a complete contrast to the kind of life he had been leading thus far. He refused and went instead to teach at the Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo. There his Master Ibn Sab'in was expelled by the influence of Al Qastalani (d. 1267). Ibn Sab'in went to Mecca and Al-Shushtari became the Master of the adepts of Ibn Sab'in in Cairo.

In 1249, he fought against the Crusaders from his *ribat* (fortress-monastery) in Damietta. He had been put in charge of all Ibn Sab'in's disciples there. Later he travelled various times to Mecca to be with his master Ibn

²⁵¹ **EL NASHAR, Ali Sami** (1953) Abul Hasan Al Sustari místico andaluz y autor de zéjeles y su influencia en el mundo musulmán. In: Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos. Número especial, Primer año, N° 1, pp. 135-137.

Sab'in. In 650/1252 Al-Shushtari travelled to Syria and lived in the *ribat* of Al Qalandaiya. While in Egypt and Syria, Al-Shushtari was keen to nurture dialogue with Christian monks, encouraging interfaith discussions and becoming familiar with their teachings and customs.

Some have viewed his mention of the drinking of wine as an allusion to the Christian Eucharist. However, it is far more likely to be in the Sufi tradition expressed by Ibn Al-Fariḍ and others, where wine symbolises the love of the Essence. After Ibn Sab'in had died in Mecca in /1269, Al-Shushtari was persecuted by orthodox Muslims and fell ill. Like his master, he was regarded with suspicion because of his supposed adherence to the doctrine of incarnation (*hulul*). He died in the same year, 668/1269, near Damietta²⁵².



Book of Emilio Galindo Aguilar²⁵³

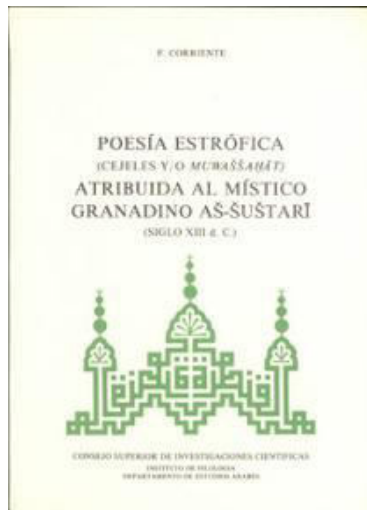
²⁵² **ÁLVEREZ, Lourdes Maria** (2009) Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shushtari: songs of love and devotion. Paulist Press.

ÁLVEREZ, Lourdes Maria (2004) Reading the Mystical Signs in the Songs of Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shushtari. In: *Muwashshah* (proceedings of SOAS conference).

²⁵³ **GALINDO AGUILAR, Emilio** (2000) Peregrino y juglar del Amor. Editorial Darek-Nyumba.

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The isnad of the *tarika sab'iniyya* given by Al-Shushtari in one of his *kasidas* shows the overlapping of the two cultures, the Greek and the Muslim, as accepted by the followers of Ibn Sab'in. One finds the authors: Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Al-Halladi. Also Al-Shudhi, who as a mystic was the teacher of that strange character Al-Suhrawardi, and Abu Madyan. In this initiatory chain, Hellenistic philosophy and Muslim tasawwuf are linked together under the patronage of Hermes, the spokesman of the gods and their messenger to men²⁵⁴.



**Poesía estrófica (cejeles, y/o muwassahat) atribuida al místico
granadino As-Sustari (siglo XVIII d. C.)**²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ **HANIF, N.** (2002) Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis: África and Europe, p. 78.

²⁵⁵ **CORRIENTE, F.** (1988) Poesía estrófica (cejeles, y/o muwassahat) atribuida al místico granadino As-Sustari (siglo XVIII d. C.). Editorial: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid.

The poet Shushtarí, who took his place at the head of the devotees (*mutajarrdin*), brought to Egypt before Ibn Sab'in's death about 400 adepts, including Abu Ya'qub Al-Mubashshir, the hermit of Bâb Zuwaila in Cairo²⁵⁶. Shushtari was known for his mystic poems, which he used to dance and sing in the *suq*. They were sung in the form of a *zajal*, accompanied by tambourines, other instruments and often with a choir of disciples.

Shushtari has been linked with the main disciples of Ibn Sab'in. First successor in Syriawas the Prince Ibn Hud of Murcia (d. 699/1298, Damascus) then the philosopher and ash'arite Safi Urmawi (d. 715 at Damascus), his biographer Yahya-b-Sulayman; Ibn Watil; in Egypt, Safir Hy.-b-'Al Ibn Abi Mansur (d. 682; author of the *fakk al azrar*), and two Saidiens, 'Abdalwahid Mu'akhhir and Sharif 'Abdal'aziz Manufi (master of 'AbdAl-ghaffar Qusi), Shams Iki (of the khanqah Sa'd Al-su'ada d. 697), and A. AA. Ibn Mutarrif (d. 707). One quotes strictly two Shushtariya: Ibn Luyun (Abu 'Uthman Sa'id b-AJ. A., abbreviator of the risala), an Andalusian, and A. Yq. Ibn Mubashhir, the hermite of Bab Zuwaylé at Cairo. A tariqa Shustariya remains, separate from the Sab'iniya: l'isnad magh-rebin, through A. Ibn Qunfudh Qusamtini et 'A. Q. Fasi, of these two tariqa, after S. Murtada Zabidi Bilgrami, within the appendix "Hermetism" of Festugière²⁵⁷.

A let us know that Al-Shushtari was a disciple of Qadi Muhyi 'l-Din Al-Shatibi and Ibn Sab'in Al-Ghafiqi. Furthermore, he was a friend of Shihab Al-Din Al-

²⁵⁶ **SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, Beirut J.** (1998) *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 143.

²⁵⁷ **MARÇAIS, W.** (1950) *Recherches sur Shustari, poète andalou enterré à Damiette. – Mélanges*, pp. 251-276.

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Suhrawardi²⁵⁸. In this way we learn that another nickname of Ibn Sab'in was Al-Ghafiqi.

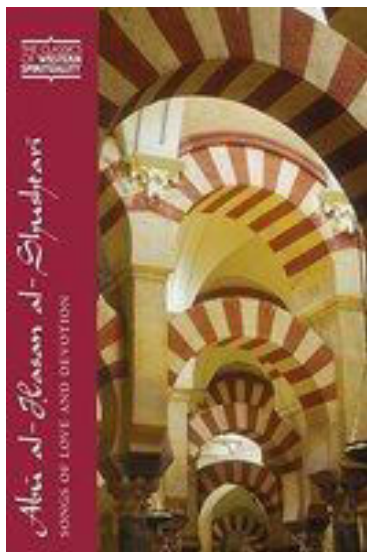
The relationship between the master Ibn Sab'in and his disciple Shushtari is perhaps best expressed by these lines of the poem Shushtari:

The ocean of my meditation is
deep and fragrant with musk
Whosoever ventures truly into it
fears no drowning
The people of the path know
From the words of
'Abd Al-Haqq [Ibn Sab'in]
That this ocean is not to be
compared with my ocean
The ocean of my medication is Pearls;
Flowers are at my shore²⁵⁹

Many verses of Al-Shushtari's poetry (62 short poems called "Tawshih") were identified in the classical Andalusian music that is today sung in Morocco. In the Mashriq (the orient), he is mostly remembered today for his poem *A little sheikh from the land of Meknes* a song which retains huge popularity.

²⁵⁸ **सानुल्लाह, मुहम्मद** (2010) Symbolic Islamo-European Encounter in Prosody: *Muwashshahat, Azjal* and the Catalan Troubadours. In: *Islamic Studies*, 49:3, pp. 357- 400. In p. 378.

²⁵⁹ **JOHNSON, N. Scott** (1995) Ocean and Pearls: Ibn Sab'in, Shushtari and the Doctrine of Absolute Unity. In: *The Magazine of Khaniqahi Nimatuallahi*, Issues 25-32, p. 25.



Songs Of Love And Devotion²⁶⁰

Michael Frishkopf²⁶¹ informs us that colloquial mystical poetry is also sung, and may also be exceedingly difficult, as for example Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shuhtari²⁶². Another

²⁶⁰ **ALVEREZ, Lourdes Maria & SELLS, Michael A.** (2010) Songs of Love and Devotion. Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ.

²⁶¹ **FRISHKOPF, Michael** (2000) Inshad Dini and Aghani Diniyya in Twentieth Century Egypt: A Review of styles, Genres, and Available recordings. In: Middle East Studies Association Bulletin, Vol. 34, N° 2, pp. 167-183. In p. 177.

²⁶² More information in:

GALINDO AGUILAR, Emilio (2000) Al-Sustari: peregrino y juglar del amor. Madrid: Darek-Nyumba.

CORRIENTE CORDOBA, Federico (1983) Observaciones sobre la métrica de as-Sustari. In: Awraq: Estudios sobre el mundo árabe e islámico contemporáneo, Vol. 5-6, pp. 39-87.

MASSIGNON, Louis (1949) Investigaciones sobre Sustari, poeta andaluz, enterrado en Damieta. In: Al-Andalus: revista de las Escuelas de Estudios Árabes de Madrid y Granada, Vol. 14, N° 1, pp. 29-58.

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aspect of the poetry of Al-Shushtari is that the metaphorical imagery impregnates his poetry in such a way that it develops a symbolic character. Omaima Abou-Bakr shows in his article the curious affinity between the Islamic mystical tradition and the Western Christian equivalent²⁶³:

ZAJAL 99
Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shushtari

Come Beloved, let us sip from the cup of passion,
And give the wine seller my spilled liquor and the clothes on
my back;

Then we tear the turbans and cut the shawls,
And we knock on monasteries' doors and accompany deacons,
And go to hermitages looking for hoods.
In order to see the benefit of my wine by means of chandeliers,
And to live in the tavern, a wanton man, with no intimate
friends.

.....

"Before this, I was a treasure, hidden in Being,
Then I knew my Essence, and discovered Me."

ALI SAMI EL NASHAR (1953) Abul Hasan Al Sustari Místico andaluz y autor de zéjeles y su influencia en el mundo musulmán. In: Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islamicos, N° 1, pp. 122-155.

CORTÉS GARCÍA, Manuela (1995) Nuevos datos para el estudio de la música en Al-Andalus de dos autores granadinos: Al-Sustari e Ibn Al-Jatib. In: Música oral del Sur: revista internacional, N° 1, pp. 177-194.

²⁶³ **OMAIMA ABOU-BAKR** (1992) The Symbolic Function of Methaphor in Medieval Sufi Poetry: The Case of Shushtari. In: Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics, N° 12, Metaphor and Allegory in the Middle Ages, pp. 40-57. In pp. 40, 54 and 56.

Omaima Abou-Bakr gives in his dissertaton²⁶⁴ various Zajals that refer to Ibn Sab'ín ('Abd Al-Haqq):

ZAJAL 79
Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shushtari

0-One-say it loudly; you have no second,
And be faqir and throw away the weapon.

.....

5-Work for untying the symbols, for repentance is seventy in number
So if you grasp them, you will win seventy spaces nearer,
And ask-for any need-the servant of Ibn Sab'in

ZAJAL 38
Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shushtari

0-The fact was proven true for me and it spread throughout my
innermost being,
That the 'essence' of vision is the eye of the essence of thought.

.....

3.-The sea of my thought is deep; it smells of musk;
Whoever ventures truly in it fears no drowning.
The people of the Path know from the words of 'Abd Al-Haqq,
That this sea is not to be compared to my sea:
The sea of my thought is pearls; flowers are at my shore.

Ibn Al-Khatib composed, around 1362, the work *Rawdat Al-ta'rif*, an encyclopedic and didactic treatise on Sufism. He shared a copy of it with his friend Ibn Khaldun. For Ibn Al-Khatib lovers of God, in order to be in His presence

²⁶⁴ **ABOU-BAR, Omaima Mostafa** (1987) A study of the poetry of Al-Shushtari. Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature of the University of California, Berkely, pp. 150-152 and 157-158.

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ought to renounce all images. In this respect Ibn 'Arabi and Al-Shushtari expressed similar ideas. Ibn 'Arabi respects the importance of images to Christians but firmly promotes his more inner personal feeling of the image use in Muslim devotions. Al-Shushtari appears to demonstrate a similarly undecided attitude toward representations or images²⁶⁵.

Ramond Lull did not copy only Ibn Sab'in, but also Al-Shushtari. Muhammad Sanaullah states that the significance Al-Shushtari song yields is the fact that its refrain was adopted by Ramond Lull who rendered it as "What do I care/What will men say²⁶⁶."

²⁶⁵ **ROBINSON, Cynthia** (2008) *Marginal Ornament: Poetics Mimesis, and Devotion in the Palace of the Lions*. In: *Muqarnas*, Vol. 25, *Frontiers of Islamic art and architecture: Essays in Celebration of Oleg Grabar's eighteenth birthday*, pp. 185-214. In pp. 206-207.

²⁶⁶ **AHMED MOHAMMED AL-MAQQARI** (1855-1861) *Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne*, 2 vols. Vol. I, pp. 570-581. Cited by **MUHAMMAD SANAULLAH** (2010) *Symbolic Islamo-European Encounter in Prosody: Muwashshahat, Azjal and the Catalan Troubadours*. In: *Islamic Studies*, 49:3, pp. 357-400. In p. 378.

Ibn Abi Watil, pupil of Ibn Sab'in

A disciple of Ibn Sab'in called Ibn Abi l-Tawil thought that the Mahdi would appear to the Maghreb²⁶⁷.

Ibn abi Watil²⁶⁸, in his commentary on the *Kitab Khal' anna'layn*, was one of the prominent Sufis who discuss the Fatimid. Ibn Khaldun states²⁶⁹:

According to Ibn Abi Watil, the sum of their beliefs in connection with (the Fatimid) is that (in pre-Islamic times) there has been error and blindness. Then, truth and right guidance made their appearance through prophecy. Prophecy was followed by the caliphate, and the caliphate, in turn, was followed by royal authority. Royal authority, then, reverted to tyranny, presumptuousness, and worthlessness.

In the *Muqaddima*, this theory is consistently put into the mouth of Ibn Abi Watil²⁷⁰:

..God sends the seal of the saints to restore the word to its original moral and social harmony. The seal's pious reign, which Ibn Abi Watil called "sainthood" (*wilaya*), is however, short-lived, for it is soon supplanted by deputyship, which, in turn, is followed by the oppressive secular rule. At the end of

²⁶⁷ **IBN KHALDUN** (1862-1868) *Prolégomènes*, trad, de Slane. Paris, Vol. II, pp. 195-199. Cited by **GARCÍA-ARENAL, Mercedes** (1990) *La conjonction du sufisme et du sharifisme au Maroc: le Mahdi comme sauveur*. In: *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, N° 55-56, pp. 233-256.

²⁶⁸ **ABD AR RAHMAN BIN MUHAMMED IBN KHALDUN**. (2012) Translated by Franz Rosenthal, p. 411.

²⁶⁹ **IBN KHALDUN** (1980) *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to history*; in three volumes. Bollingen Foundation Inc., New York, pp. 187-188.

²⁷⁰ **KNYSH, Alexander** (1999) *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*. State University of New York, pp. 193-194.

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time, the Antichrist (*Al-dajl*) will appear to immortalize the tyranny and oppression associated with the godless *mulk*. He will be opposed by the ultimate *Mahdi*, 'Isa b. Maryam, who will destroy him in a final eschatological fight before the Day of Judgement.

However, one has to understand that nowhere Ibn Khaldun does claim that Ibn Abi Watil identified Ibn Sab'in with the Mahdi or that Ibn Sab'in himself pretended to be this Mahdi²⁷¹.

²⁷¹ **AKASOY, Anna** (2008) The muhaqq as Mahdi? Ibn Sab'in and Madhism among Andalusian Mystics in the 12th/13th centuries. In: *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*. Herausgegeben von Wolfram Brandes und Felicitas Schmieder. Berlin, pp. 313-338. In p. 325.

‘Afif Al-din Al-Tilimsani, the son-in-law of Ibn Sab’in

Ana Akasoy²⁷² observed a phenomenon mostly associated with Andalusis, that of the philosophical Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi, Ibn Sab’in, Al-Shushtari and ‘Afif Al-Din Al-Tilimsani. The attempts of scholars to identify the roots of this movement are nothing easy.

Afif Al-Din Al-Tilimsani was a student of Sadr Al-Din, Muhammad Yunus Al-Kunawi (1207-1274), who in turn was a disciple of Ibn ‘Arabi²⁷³.

Al-Safadi questioned the sincerity of Al-Qastallani when the last condemned the monistic Sufism. Al-Safadi showed the close affinity of Al-Qastallani’s poetry with the verses of Ibn Al-Farid, Al-Shushtari, and Al-Tilimsani²⁷⁴.

‘Afif Al-din Al-Tilimsani (1213 - 1291) played an important role in the diffusion of the school of Ibn Arabi and continues being an important Sufi²⁷⁵.

²⁷² **AKASOY, Anna** (2012) Andalusí exceptionalism: the example of “Philosophical Sufism” and the significance of 1212. In: *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 4:1, pp. 113-117. In p. 115.

²⁷³ **HANIF, N.** (2002) *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis: Central Asia and Middle East*. Sarup & Sons, New Delhi-11002, p. 411.

²⁷⁴ **KNYSH, Alexander** (1999) *Ibn ‘Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*. State University of New York, p. 45.

²⁷⁵ **‘AFIF AL-DIN AL-TILIMSANI** (a. Al-Rabi Sul. b.’A. Al-Abidi Al-Kumi) (2000) *Sharh Mawaqif Al-Niffari*, éd. Jamal Al-Marzuqi, Préface ‘Atif Al-‘Iraqi, Le Caire, Al-Hay’a («Al-Turath»), 563 p.

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Ibn Sab'in as well as his son-in-law and disciple, 'Afif Al-din Al-Tilimsani, were influencing the young 'Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabulusi²⁷⁶ (1641-1731).

²⁷⁶ **SIRRIYEH, Elizabeth** (1985) The Mystical Journeys of 'Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabulusi. In: *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Bd. 25, N° 1/4, pp. 84-96. In p. 87.

For more detailed accounts of Nabulusi's life and family background see **BUSSE, H.** (1968) Sheikh Abd Al-Ghani and Nabulusis Reisen im Libanon, (1100/1689/1112/1700) In: *Der Islam*, XLIV, pp. 73-7.

Ali Al-Harrali

Ibn Sab'in was followed in Damascus by a leading disciple, 'Ali Al-Harrali²⁷⁷, whose father was a Jewish convert²⁷⁸. Apparently the origin of his name was near to Murcia²⁷⁹ and known as a commentator on the Qur'an²⁸⁰.

Al-Harrali²⁸¹ (d. 637/1240) was born in Marrakech and died in Hama (Syria)²⁸². He sent a letter to the religious

²⁷⁷ **POUZET, Louis** (1988) Damas au VIIe/XIIIe siècle: vie structures religieuses d'une métropole islamique. Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, pp. 218-219.

DERMENGHEM, Émile (1981) Vies des saints musulmans, pp. 276-288.

ADDAS, Claude (1989) Ibn 'Arabi ou la Quête du sofre rouge, pp. 229, 230, 294, 302.

²⁷⁸ **UNKNOWN** (1997) History of Jewish Philosophy. Routledge History of World Philosophies. Volume 2, Edited by Daniel H. Fran, Oliver Leaman, pp. 93-114. In p. 101.

²⁷⁹ **MURTADA AZ-ZABIDI** (2007) Tag Al Arus XXVIII, pp. 293-194. Al-Haralli or for others Al-Harrali. The significance originates from a place near Murcia or a Berber clan. See:

Taj Al-Arus Min Jawahir Al-Qamus by Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdul-razzaq Hussayni Yamani Zubaidy.

<https://archive.org/details/alhelawy09>

²⁸⁰ **HIMMICH, Bensalem** (2011) A Muslim Suicide. Syracuse University Press. New York, p. 415.

NWYIA, Paul (1990) Abu Al-Hasan 'Ali Al-Harrali (M. 638/1241) Langage figuratif et figures bibliques dans l'exégèse coranique de Harrali, suivi de trois traités inédits de Harrali: "Kitab miftah albab Al-muqfal li-fahm Al-Qur'an Al-munzal. In: Mélanges de L'université Saint-Joseph, Vol. LI], pp. 239-256.

²⁸¹ **KONINGSVELD, P.S. van** (1995) Muslim Slaves and Captives in Western Europe during the Late Middle Ages. In: Islam and Christian-Muslim Relation, vol. 6, N° 1, pp. 5-23. In pp. 8-10. Cited by **FIERRO BELLO, Maribel** (2008) Notes on Reason, Language and Conversion in the 3th Century in the Iberian Peninsula. In: Quaderns de la Mediterrania. Ramon Llull and Islam, the Beginning of Dialogue, pp. 295-302.

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authorities of Tarragona. Several members of his family lived there in captivity. His grounds were that there existed no real difference between religions. This evoked mystical notions; all historic faiths were external manifestations of a common "kernel". It became clear that the doctrine he used in his letter was that one of *wahdat Al-wuyud*.

Al Harrali exerted a strong influence on Al-Biqā'i, one of the only medieval Muslim authors known to have studied a written (Arabic) text of the Torah. He also worked with a Jewish translator²⁸³. He was the author of the book *Kitab mistah Al-bab Al-muqfal* (Book of the key to the locked door), a manuscript with the number of 1398 that is located at the National Library of Paris²⁸⁴.

Most of Al-Harrali's work is only written in Arabic. For his work of *Al-Hikam* we have to consult the Arabic work of Nwyia²⁸⁵.

RARNIC, Jusuf (2001) A collection of papers. The faculty of Islamic studies in Sarajevo. Bosnia-Herzegovina, pp. 15-146.

²⁸² **GILLIOT, Claude** (2010) Koninuität und Wandel in der «Klassischen» Islamischen Koranauslegung (II./VIII.-XII./XIX. Century). In: Der Islam, 85, pp. 1-155. In p. 104.

²⁸³ **LAZARUS-YAFEH, H.** (1992) Intertwined Worlds. Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism (Princeton. Princeton University Press), p. 128, n. 62. Cited by **FRANK, Daniel & LEAMAN Oliver** (2005) History of Jewish Philosophy. London, p. 84.

²⁸⁴ **ÁLVAREZ, Lourdes Maria** (2009) Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shushtari: songs of love and devotion. Paulist Press, p. 185.

²⁸⁵ **NWYIA, Paul** (1990) Abu Al-Hasan 'Ali Al-Harrali (M. 638/1241) Langage figuratif et figures bibliques dans l'exégèse coranique de Harrali [[separata de Mélanges de L'université Saint-Joseph, Vol. LI] [72 pp. In Arabic].

Yahya b. Sulayman Al-Balansi

This disciple²⁸⁶ wrote a letter with the title “Al-wirata Al-Muhammadiyya wAl-Fusul Al-Datiyya”, in which he enumerates the qualities of Ibn Sab’in²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁶ **SOLIHIN, M. & ROSIHON, ANWAR** (2002) *Kamus tasawuf*, p. 87.

²⁸⁷ **‘ALIE DAHROUGE** (1983) *Le probleme de l’âme chez Ibn Sab’in. Étude analytique du Budd Al-‘Arif. Thèse pour le Doctorat de 3ème Cycle. Université de Paris I. Pantheon-Sorbonne*, pp. 28 and 29.

6. Abu Al-‘Abbas Al-Mursi.

Shihab Al-Din Abu Al-‘Abbas Ahmad Ibn ‘Umar Ibn ‘Ali Al-Khasraji Al-Ansari Al-Mursi, (d. 686/1287) was a prominent master of the Shadhiliyya Sufi order. He was born in 616H/1219AD in Murcia, in the south-east of Al-Andalus, where he began his studies in the traditional Islamic disciplines. His family was involved in the trading business and he was well educated in the Quran & Sunna (aka the Prophet Muhammad’s teachings). In Spain little is known about him, but happily we have more information in other countries, of which the Thesis of Sobhi Mina Botros is the most important one²⁸⁸. On the other hand we cannot forget the article of Dunlop and the book of Ibn Ata Allah Al-Iskandari²⁸⁹.

When Abu Al-‘Abbas was still a boy, it seems that he showed early religious and spiritual tendencies which later developed to make him the great pole (qutb) that came to be. Ibn ‘Ata’ Allah reports that he once heard the shaykh say that as a boy, he was with his tutor (mu’addib) writing on a slate when a man approached him and said, “A Sufi does not blacken whiteness.” The boy Abu Al-‘Abbas retorted, “it is not as you claim; rather, he does not

²⁸⁸ **MINA BOTROS, Sobhi** (1976) *Abu Al-‘Abbas Al-Mursi: A study of Some Aspects of His Mystical Thought*. A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of McGill University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Islamic Studies. Montreal, Quebec.

²⁸⁹ **DUNLOP, D.M.** (1945) *A Spanish Muslim Saint: Abu'l-‘Abbas Al-Mursi*. In: *The Muslim World*, N° 45, pp. 181-196.

IBN ATA ALLAH AL-ISKANDARI (2005) *The Subtle Blessings in the Saintly Lives of Abul Al-Abbas Al-Mursi & His Master Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shadhili*, translated by Nancy Roberts, ed. Fons Vitae.

blacken the whiteness of pages, one's pure life, with the blackness of sins." Apart from manifesting these tendencies, Abu Al-'Abbas had as tutor a saintly person, who seems to have taken every opportunity to lead his pupil on the right path to God. Abu Al-'Abbas referred to this type of education and guidance by recounting this illustrative story: Once, while still a small boy, Abu Al-'Abbas went to see a phantom show close to his house. The next morning, when he made his appearance before his tutor, the latter received him with words of criticism that he recited in verse form: "O watcher of phantom images in wonderment, you are yourself the phantom, were you to see."

He left Spain with his family in 640 H (1242 AD) fleeing the gradually declining Islamic empire in Spain. The family was destined to go and settle in Mecca, Hijaz - today's Saudi Arabia. So Al-Mursi accompanied his father as well as his brother, Abdullah Jalal Al-Din and his mother Sayyida Fatima, daughter of Shaykh 'Abd Al-Rahman Al-Maliqi. They travelled from Algeria until they reached the furthest outpost of the shores of Tunisia when a violent storm hit them. Their ship capsized near the shores of Buna of Tunisia, Only Abul Abbas and his brother survived. Both brothers made it to the shores of Tunisia where they lived briefly: Muhammad taking trade and commerce as a profession, while Abul Abbas taught reading and religion to locals.

The story of the first meeting between Abu Al-Abbas and Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shadhili, as given by Abu Al-'Abbas himself, sounds interesting and was obviously meant to reveal the mystical talents of the two, and to show that Abu Al-Abbas had long been destined to occupy the all-important position of pole after Al-Shadhili. The story tells

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of someone who invited Abu Al-'Abbas to accompany him to see Al-Shadhili who, at the time, had his residence in a small mosque (Zawiyah) on the mountain of Zaghwan. Although Abu Al-'Abbas had already heard about the great shaykh, he nevertheless decided to consult God first before he paid him any visit. That same night, he dreamed in his sleep that he climbed to the top of a mountain where he saw a man sitting clad in a green cloak with someone on his right and another on his left. When Abu Al-'Abbas looked up at the man, the latter said, "I found the successor of this time (Khalifat Al-zaman)," upon which Abu al-'Abbas woke up from his sleep. The next morning, after the Morning Prayer, Abu Al-'Abbas, who must have taken his dream to signify God's permission for him to proceed, went with the man who had previously invited him to visit Al-Shadhili. On arriving there, Abu Al-'Abbas was surprised to see everything as he had seen it in his dream, and he even heard Al-Shadhili addressing him in the same words, i.e.: "I found the successor of this time." When Abu Al-'Abbas gave his name and lineage at a question from Al-Shadhili, the latter said: "You were lifted up to me ten years ago."

Abbas Al-Mursi married one of the daughters of Al-Shadhili who gave birth to children, amongst them Muhammad and Ahmad. In 642H/1244AD, Shaykh Al-Shadhili saw the Prophet Muhammad in this sleep who ordered him to move to Egypt. So he left Tunisia with Abu'l 'Abbas, his brother Abdullah his servant Abu Al-'Azayim and several others, finally to enter Alexandria from the west at 'Amud Al-Sawari. There Al-Shadhili took up for permanent residence one of the towers on the wall of Alexandria while Abu Al-'Abbas, presumably following the instructions of his shaykh, went to live in the Muqassam quarter in Cairo. Every night he came to

Alexandria and attended the meeting place of the Shaikh Abu'l Hasan, then returned to Cairo. He studied under him the book called *Khatmu'l-Auliya'* by Al-Hakim at Tirmidhi, and he and his Shaikh Abu'l-Hasan respected and honoured him.

Many Spanish immigrant scholars chose to live in Alexandria after the collapse of the best part of Andalus, and the gradual domination of Christian forces over Spain. Abu'l Al-Abbas became one of Al-Shadhili's best students. The governor of Alexandria requested that he should meet him and take his hand and be his Shaikh. However, Abu'l Al-Abbas said to the messenger, I am not a man to be played with. And he never met him till his death. He never corresponded with the governors about anything, but used to say to him who made petition, I shall ask that for you from God.

In 656AH/1258AD, Al-Shadhili and Abu Al-'Abbas, accompanied by others, went on their last trip together to perform the holy pilgrimage. It seems that Al-Shadhili knew beforehand that he was going to die on the way, for he asked his companions to take along with them a pickaxe and a shovel so as to be able to bury whoever died during the trip. Since he had never made that request before, it was taken by the others to be an indication of his approaching end. While the group were on their way across the desert of 'Aydhab, Al-Shadhili was taken seriously ill, and finally died, at the small town of Humaytharah where his companions buried him. However, before the shaykh died, he had a private conversation with Abu Al-'Abbas, following which he told his companion that Abu Al-'Abbas was to succeed him after his death, and that he was one of God's gates. After the death of Al-Shadhili, Abu Al-'Abbas's

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reputation went far and wide, especially in Alexandria which he took up for permanent residence. Every summer, he used to go to Cairo where he discoursed and taught at the mosque of Al-Hakim. Moreover, he kept the tradition, set by Al-Shadhili, of going from time to time to the mosque of 'Amr Ibn Al-'As at Al-Fustat where his discourses were mostly attended by the learned Muslims.

Abu Al-Abbas lived in Alexandria for 43 years as a scholar and teacher until his death in 1286. He was buried in a small building near the eastern harbor in Alexandria, close to the dome of Al-Maghawri.

In 1307, El Sheikh Zayn Al-Din Ibn Al-Qattan, one of the richest traders of Alexandria, visited the tomb. The story goes that Al-Qattan has contracted alopecia which caused the loss of his beard and eyebrows. As a result, he felt so degraded that he sought the medical advice of almost every doctor in Egypt, but to no avail. At last, having heard about the tomb of Abu Al-'Abbas, he visited it several times and repeatedly applied dust from it to his face. Miraculously, the story says, his beard and eyebrows started growing again. In grateful acknowledgement, the merchant had the constructions on the shaykh's tomb erected. He funded a mausoleum and dome for the tomb, along with a small mosque.

The tomb of Abu Al-Abbas became a place of pilgrimage for many Muslims from Egypt and Morocco who passed through Alexandria on their way to and from Mecca. The mosque was periodically restored over the centuries by rulers who built themselves tombs next to the saint. Most of the present structure dates from 1775, when the Algerian Sheikh Abu el Hassan El Maghreby built a much larger mosque on the site. It was fully renovated in 1863,

and an annual festival was established to celebrate the birth of Abu Al-Abbas Al-Mursi.

Biographies of the founder Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili and his successor Abu'l-'Abbás Al-Mursi were written by another prominent member of the order Ibn 'Ata'u'llah, himself a pupil of Abú'l-'Abbas. This work is the primary source of the later accounts, but is difficult to obtain. Meantime the following pages from Sha'rani dealing with Abu'l-'Abbas throw light on the life and character of a remarkable man.



Abu Al-Abbas Al-Mursi Mosque
Courtesy of: (c) Leonard J. De Francisci

They may be compared with the biography of the saint given by Maqqari, writing about eighty years later. Sha'rani's account is translated from the *Tabaqatu'l-Kubra*, a work well enough known, which was written in

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Egypt and completed AH.952. Its original title was *Lawáqihu'l-Anwar fī Tabaqati'l-Akhyar*, but the other name is now in use. It is readily available in a number of printed editions.

Abu'l-'Abbás composed no books. He used to say, “The sciences of this Order (sc. the Shadhiliyah) are the sciences of assurance, and the minds of the generality of creatures do not comprehend the sciences of assurance.” Similarly his Shaikh Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili composed nothing and used to say, “My companions are my books.”

The Abu Al-Abbas Al-Mursi Mosque is the most historic and most beautiful mosque in Alexandria. It was built primarily in 1775 over the tomb of a Spanish scholar and saint, Abu El Abbas El Mursi (1219-86), and stands on Mosque Square overlooking the eastern harbor.

7. Al-Hasan Ibn ‘Adud Al-daula Ibn Hud Al-Gudami.

Another figure that cannot be missing in the list of the erudites who had to do with the Sufism and the Muslims related to the Ricote Valley was Al-Hasan Ibn ‘Adud Al-daula Ibn Hud Al-Gudami. Among reports of conversion of Jews to Islam via Sufism is an account concerning the Muslim Sufi Ibn Hud who lived in Damascus²⁹⁰ at the end of the thirteenth century. He was a descendant of the royal family of Banu Hud who were numbered among the *muluk Al-tawaif* (*reyes de Taifas*) in eleventh-century Spain. His far uncle, Abu ‘Amir Yusuf b. Ahmad I b. Hud Al-Mu’taman (Almuctamam), who ruled until 478/1085, was a scholar and scientist. Al-Mu’taman’s book on mathematics was drafted and revised by Moses Maimonides, who used it as a textbook for instruction. Another uncle was Al-Mutawakkil ‘ala Allah Muhammad b. Yusuf b. Hud Al-Gudami, who fought the Almohads from 625/1228 and became sultan of Granada. Al-Hasan Ibn Hud Al-Gudami’s father was governor of the city of Murcia in the name of his brother Al-Mutawakkil²⁹¹ who was proclaimed King at a place called As-sokheyrah, in the neighbourhood of Murcia. Ignaz Goldziher was one of the first who wrote about this Sufi²⁹²:

²⁹⁰ **GEOFFROY, E.** (1995) Le traité de soufisme d’un disciple d’Ibn Taymiyya: Ahmad ‘Imad Al-din Al-Wasiti (d. 711/1311) In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 82, pp. 83-101.

²⁹¹ **KRAEMER, Joek L.** (1992) The Andalusian Mystik Ibn Hud and the Conversion of the Jews. In: *Israel Oriental Studies*, Vol. 12, pp. 59-73.

²⁹² **GOLDZIHNER, Ignaz** (1893) Ibn Hud, the Mohammedan Mystic, and the Jews of Damascus. In: *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Oct., pp. 218-220.

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«As the name implies, he belonged to the princely family of the *Banú Hud*, his uncle, on his father's side, being Al-Mutawakkil 'ala Alláh-one of those Andalusian kinglets who, after the eleventh century, distributed themselves over the remnants of that territory which once formed the mighty Western Caliphate.

Learning was not foreign to this princely family; and it is just in this connection that an interest attaches to the information given by Steinschneider that a work by Mu'tamin Ibn Hud, Prince of Saragossa, formed the subject of study of Maimonides, with Ibn 'Aknin. The father of our Hasan Ibn Hud occupied, as we shall observe, a high position in the State. That of the son, named for short, Abu 'Ali Ibn Hud, was far less brilliant. He was, however, not the only prince who denied himself the worldly pomp of his maternal inheritance, and adopted the mode of life of an ascetic.

The Scheikh Shams Al-din relates as follows:---“The Scheikh and great ascetic, Abû 'Ali Ibn Hûd Al-Mursî, one of the great authorities on monistic Sufiism (Al-tasawwuf 'alâ tarîkat Al-wahdat), was born in the year 633 of the Hegira (= 1235-6), at Murcia, of which city his father was the governor. To an extraordinary degree he yielded himself up to ascetic habits, and retired from the world, subjecting himself to the drunkenness (ecstasy of mysticism), which lifted him out of himself, and divested him of his very nature. He devoted himself to medicine, philosophy, and the Ascetic Poema of the School of the Sufis, and blended the knowledge of these subjects together. He undertook the pilgrimage to Mekka, travelled through Yemen, and came to Syria. His dignified bearing was such as to inspire reverence: a hoary man of gentle demeanour, possessed of much knowledge, who had many

disciples and adherents. Upon his head he wore a skull cap, which was not concealed by the turban; upon his person the dress of a monk.

“He was constantly in a deeply contemplative mood, free from the pleasures of the world, in an uninterrupted state of mourning, living in retirement from all mankind. He was on one occasion seized in a state of intoxication in the Jewish Quarter, and brought before the Prefect of the city, who was favourably disposed towards him and acquitted him. He alleged that the Jews had, out of malice, made him drunk, so that they might circulate this charge against him. He had, it is true, been a source of much evil to them in the past, and had caused quite a host of them (among others *Sa’îd* and *Barakât*) to abjure their faith, and to become converted to Islamism. The Scheikh was fond of stewed leg-of-mutton: they invited him to one of their houses and put before him his dainty dish. After he had partaken thereof, he relapsed into his wonted state of absence of mind. Whereupon they had wine brought: he did not disapprove of the presence of this drink. They bade the cup pass round, and he, too, partook, so as to make no exception.

“They now led him, in an intoxicated state, to the public way. The news reached the Wâlî, who rode up to Ibn Hûd, took him upon his own horse, placing him behind himself, shouting from time to time to the excited crowd: “What do you want from Ibn Hud?” He has just taken some ‘drugs’, pronouncing the word ‘drug’ as if it were ‘dregs’- a pun obviously enjoyed even by the orthodox biographer²⁹³.”

²⁹³ **GOITEIN, S.A.** (1953) A Jewish Addict to Sufism: in the time of the Nagid David II Maimonides. In: *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 37-49.

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“Under his guidance the Jews wanted to occupy themselves with the study of the Kitâb Al-dalâlat: this is a work upon the principles of their religion by Ra'îs Mûsâ. The Scheikh Shams Al-dîn relates, in the name of our Scheikh 'Imâd Al-dîn al Wâsitî, thus:—'I (Al-Wâsitî) came to him (Ibn Hûd) and begged him to undertake to guide me in spiritual things. He asked: "Upon which road? The Mosaic, the Christian, or the Mohammedan?" At sunrise, he turned towards the sun, and crossed himself."

He was a friend of the physician 'Afif 'Imrân, of the Scheikh Sa'îd Al-Magrebî, and other learned men. When he died, the Kâdî Badr Al-dîn b. Gamâ'a was the only one who read the burial service over his remains. He was buried on the declivity of Mount Kâsyûn (Damascus) in the year 697 of the Hegira (1297-1298).

The Scheikh Salâh Al-dîn Al-Safadî (1300-1363) relates the following concerning him:—“He was once asked by his pupil Sa'îd to show him the Creator of day: whereupon he took him by the hand, climbed on to the roof of a house, and stood half-a-day long, gazing at the sun. He used to walk to the Mosque with a fixed glance, as though he were absent-minded, with an up-lifted finger, as it is wont to be raised at confession. Burning coals were often placed in his hand when open, and he would close his hand out of mere distraction, recovering his senses only when the coal began to burn, upon which he would throw it away. People were in the habit of digging pits in his way. He was so abstracted and absent-minded that he did not notice them, and fell into these pits.”

Until here, we have related the study of Ignaz Goldziher. However, we have to take into account that the biography in Kutubi's *Fawat Al-wafayat*, used by Goldziher, is

derived from the more detailed and precise notice in Al-Safadi's *Al-Wafi bi-l-wafayat*.

According to Al-Dababi, as cited by Safadi, the great ascetic sheikh Abu 'Ali b. Hud Al-Mursi (of Murcia) was one of the prominent figures in Sufism who adhered to the way of monism (*tariqat Al-wahda*), that is, *wahdat Al-wugud*²⁹⁴, "the unity of being." Ibn Hud once went off on a journey, leaving heart and home, and eventually joined the famous Sufi philosopher, 'Abd Al-Haqq b. Sab'in. The source goes on to state that Ibn Hud occupied himself with medicine and philosophy (*Al-tibb wa-l-hikma*) and wrote Sufi ascetic poems (*zuhdiyyat Al-sufiyya*). Ibn Hud, it is then said, blended philosophy with Sufism. As an associate of Ibn Sab'in, he would naturally combine Sufi meditation with the wisdom of the philosophers. Ibn Hud was venerable, respectable and versatile. He attracted many students and a large clientele. He wore a felt cap and a fur cloak. He tended to be deeply immersed in contemplation, avoiding pleasure, and was constantly dejected and retiring from mankind²⁹⁵.

²⁹⁴ Others write: *wahdat Al-wuyud*. Cfr. **KRAEMER, Joel L.** (1992) The Andalusian Mystic Ibn Hud and the Conversion of the Jews. In: Israel Oriental Studies, Vol. 12, pp. 59-73. Cited by **URVOY, Dominique** (2008) ¿En qué medida se vio influido el pensamiento de Ramon Llull por su relación con el islam? In: Quaderns de la Mediterrania. Ramon Llull and Islam, the Beginning of Dialogue, pp. 295-302. In p. 301.

²⁹⁵ **KRAEMER, Joek L.** (1992) The Andalusian Mystik Ibn Hud and the Conversion of the Jews. In: Israel Oriental Studies, Vol. 12, pp. 59-73.

8. The solitary Granary in Europe.

“The study and comparison of different societies and cultures not only enlarges our scientific knowledge, but helps to foster a better spirit of understanding and tolerance, for which today there is such a great need”. These words were expressed by our good friend Johnny de Meulemeester (1946-2009), Professor of Archaeology in the University of Gent who had for many years of his life dedicated to the research in the Ricote Valley. He let us know that he wanted to live in the Ricote Valley after retirement and therefore he was interested in buying a property in this place.



Professor Johnny de Meulemeester at Blanca, 2003

However, an early death threw a spanner into the desires of this genial professor, but his memory will always remain both in our hearts, and in the hearts of countless students. He conducted many studies of the Cabezo de la Cobertura situated in the Ricote Valley and in his memory we will dedicate some pages of his research that he accomplished with other eminent researchers during many years²⁹⁶.

²⁹⁶ **DE MEULEMEESTER, J., AMIGUES, F. y MATTHYS, A.** (1993) Un grenier fortifié murcien hispano-musulman et mudejare. *Boletín de Arqueología Medieval*, 7: 129-134.

DE MEULEMEESTER, J. y MATTHYS, A. (1995) Un grenier collectif fortifié hispano-musulman? Le Cabezo de la Cobertera (Vallée du Río Segura / Murcie). Bilan provisoire d'une approche ethnoarchéologique. In: A. Bazzanna y M.-C. Delaigue (eds.), *Ethnoarchéologie méditerranéenne*: 181-196. Casa de Velázquez, Madrid.

DE MEULEMEESTER Johnny, AMIGUES François & MATTHYS André (1995) Un grenier fortifié murcien hispano musulman et mudéjare, *Boletín de Arqueología medieval* 7, 1993 (1995), 129-134.

MEULEMEESTER, J. DE (1998): «Même problème, même solution: quelques réflexions autour d'un grenier fortifié», en L. Feller, P. Mane, F. Piponnier (eds.), *Le village médiéval et son environnement. Études offertes à Jean-Marie Pesez*, Paris, pp. 97-112.

DE MEULEMEESTER Johnny & MATTHYS André (1998) The conservation of grain and the fortified granaries from the Maghreb to central Europe. In: *Ruralia II (Spa 1997), Památky Archeologické - supplementum 11*, Praha, 161-171.

MEULEMEESTER, J. DE (2005): «Granaries and irrigation: archaeological and ethnological investigations in the Iberian peninsula and Morocco», *Antiquity*, 79-305, pp. 609-615.

AMIGUES François, DE MEULEMEESTER Johnny & MATTHYS André. (1992) 2a Campaña de excavaciones arqueológicas en el Cabezo de la Cobertera (Abáran-Blanca). Campaña del 25 de octubre al 5 de noviembre de 1989. In: *Memorias de Arqueología 1989, Primeras Jornadas de Arqueología Regional*,

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The summary that hereafter follows belongs to one of the two papers he made when he participated in our Congress of the Valle de Ricote²⁹⁷.

«The excavations of the 13th century fortified Muslim granary of the *Cabezo de la Cobertera* formed a starting point for this research and for an ethno-archaeological analysis of the former Berber systems for long-term conservation of grain on the one hand. In the other hand, it also made it possible to study analogue systems in the Christian world.

Murcia 21-24 Marzo 1990, Colección de Memorias arqueológicas, n° 4, Murcia, 495-509.

AMIGUES, F., DE MEULEMEESTER, J. y MATTHYS, A. (1998) Un grenier fortifié almohade dans la région de Murcie: Le *Cabezo de la Cobertera* (Abarán-Blanca). In: A. Rousselle y M.C. Marandet (comps.), *Le paysage rural et ses acteurs*, Perpinyà, Presses Universitaires de Perpignan.

AMIGUES François, DE MEULEMEESTER Johnny & MATTHYS André (1996) 3a Campaña de excavaciones arqueológicas en el cerro de la Cobertera (Abáran-Blanca, Murcia). In: *Memorias de Arqueología 1990*, Colección de Memorias arqueológicas, n° 5, Murcia, 597-604.

DE MEULEMEESTER Johnny & MATTHYS André (1992) Un grenier fortifié murcien hispano-musulman et mudégar, Medieval Europe 1992, Rural Settlement. Preprinted Papers volume 8, 113-118.

AMIGUES, F., DE MEULEMEESTER, J. y MATTHYS, A. (1999) Archéologie d'un grenier collectif fortifié hispano-musulman: le Cabezo de la Cobertera (Vallée du Río Segura / Murcie). In: *Castrum, 5: Archéologie des espaces agraires méditerranéens au Moyen Âge*,: 347-359. Madrid, Casa de Velázquez.

²⁹⁷ **MEULEMEESTER, Johnny de** (2003) The Cabezo de la Cobertura (Valle de Ricote, Murcia) and the fortified granaries from the Maghreb to central Europe. En II Congreso turísticocultural Valle de Ricote. Despierte tus sentidos. Murcia: Mancomunidad de Municipios Valle de Ricote, pp. 41-56.



**From left to right:
Prof. Dr. Johnny de Meulemeester, Philippe Mignot and
Prof. Dr. Morgan de Dapper**

As far as the *Cabezo de la Cobertera* is concerned, it is in the *agadir* we are most interested. It is a more or less a spacious structure where Berbers store their crops and other important belongings. The need to construct granaries is primarily due to the climate. In those semi-dry regions on the edge of the Sahara, the harvesting of cereals cultivated on dry land or irrigated by temporary small streams only, is very irregular.

In good years, crops may be abundant but often the harvest is poor or even inexistent. So people obliging to store in anticipation of periods of famine. This forethought forms the basis of the construction of the granaries. To those climatic reasons, there is also the continued threat of

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plundering by neighbours in search of food during periods
of bad harvest.



Fortified Muslim granary of the Cabezo de la Cobertera



Fortified Muslim granary of the Cabezo de la Cobertera

The grain has to be defended. The worst enemy of those common fortified granaries and of the spirit of freedom they represented among the Berber tribes was the central government, the *makhzen*. A tribe was only subdued after the destruction of its granary, symbol of its economic and political independence, its cohesion and often, a very efficient defensive recess.

The *agadir* of southern Morocco.

The *agadir* of southern Morocco forms an institution established by the tribe or the clan, where every head of a family has the key to an individual cell. The storage cells and their outbuildings are guarded by the doorkeeper, who controls the coming and going of granary users and forbids entry to strangers. The word “*agadir*” presumably comes from Phoenician “*gadir*”, which means “wall”. Frequently, the granary is also a fortress, including watchtowers and situated at inaccessible locations. Those *agadirs* have a narrow central alley, limited by the grain stores, which have the same dimensions. The flat roof is made of earth. Protruding flagstones fixed in the walls at different levels serve as steps to reach the stores at higher floors. Sometimes, indented trunks make it possible to reach the upper floor cells. Each store has only one wooden door, which opens inwardly and except for a few ventilation orifices, there are no openings in the cell walls.

The dependencies vary in number and importance; besides the porter's lodge, there might be a mill, a smithy, a stable, a meeting room, or even a small mosque. An important *agadir* always has one or more cisterns. The curtain wall, with its *chemin de ronde*, can be fortified with a few watchtowers. One entry through the wall, in zigzag or fortified, gives access to the granary. The chosen ground is divided into equal plots; the floors are drawn by lot. One single family may have more than one cell, built by itself; they have to take care of it and keep it in good shape, as its deterioration will harm his neighbours' interests.

The common parts of the granary are in the community's charge, constructed and cared for by shared tasks. The owners choose a guard or porter, permanently attached to

the granary and care for his subsistence. The *agadir* is sacred just like a saint's tomb or a mosque. No wrong doings are committed in the granary: no thefts, no lies, no adultery or murder; the granary is inviolable and constitutes an asylum. The sacred nature might emanate from different sources. So it might originate from the maraboutique protection to which the granary is often vowed. But, on the other hand, it is quite likely that the substrata of this belief are older than Islam itself. Grain is sacred in itself, because it is the source of life. So is it acceptable that it is the stored grain itself that lends its magic power and the sacred inviolability it causes to the granary. When deals were concluded inside the granary, it was certainly done there to give the contracts this sacred protection.



Plant structures of the granary of Cabezo de la Cobertura
(Courtesy of <http://carrahila.blogspot.com.es/>)

The origin of the common granary remains obscure and the time and place of its emergence is unknown. North-

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Africa only testifies to its existence. The organisation and operating of the *agadir* are based on traditional law. The oldest known charters date back to the 16th/17th century and are written in Arabic. The excavations at the Spanish *Cabezo de la Cobertera* change the chronological picture and put back the chronology by at least three centuries. Actually the common granary might appear to be a typical Berber institution but, as we shall see, other regions show similar traditions.



Cabezo de la Cobertura
(Courtesy of <http://carrahila.blogspot.com.es/>)

The Cabezo de la Cobertera and its agadir

Our starting point, the *Cabezo de la Cobertera* near to Darrax²⁹⁸, forms an isolated mound in the middle of the valley of the river *Segura*, which flows throughout the autonomous region of Murcia in south-eastern Spain.

²⁹⁸ **LÓPEZ MORENO, Jesús Joaquín** (2003) “El granero fortificado islámico de Andorraix: un posible reclamo turístico y cultural para el Valle de Ricote”. In: *II Congreso Turístico Cultural del Valle de Ricote. Blanca, 14, 15 y 16 Nov. 2003*, Abarán (Murcia), pp. 63-74.

LÓPEZ MORENO, Jesús Joaquín (2005) Poblamiento bereber en la zona norte del Valle de Ricote. Las alquerías andaluzas de Abarán y Darrax. In: *III Congreso Turístico Cultural del Valle de Ricote. Ojós, 25 y 26 de Nov. 2005*, Ojós (Murcia), pp. 355-389.

LÓPEZ MORENO, Jesús Joaquín (2010) La alquería andalusí de Al Darrax: un despoblado entre Abarán y Blanca (Valle de Ricote). In: *Actas I Jornadas de Investigación y Divulgación sobre Abarán. Abarán, 30 abril / 7 mayo, 2010. Asociación Cultural “La Carrahila”*; Murcia.

MOLINA RUIZ, José; TUDELA SERRANO, María Luz; GUILLÉN SERRANO, Virginia (2014) Potenciación del patrimonio natural, cultural y paisajístico con el diseño de itinerarios turísticos. In: *Cuadernos de Turismo, N° 34*, pp. 189-211.

CALVO GARCÍA-TORNEL, F. & LÓPEZ BERMÚDEZ, F. (2014) Valle de Ricote, escenario en donde se funden las historias geológica, geomorfológica y humana. In: *Murgetana, N° 131, Año LXV*, pp. 35-47.

WESTERVELD, Govert (2002) Blanca, “el Ricote” de Don Quijote. Expulsión y regreso de los moriscos del último enclave islámico más grande de España. Años 1613-1654, p. 6. (www.bubok.es).

WESTERVELD, Govert (2007) Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Ana Félix y el morisco Ricote del Valle de Ricote en “Don Quijote” del año 1615. (capítulos 54, 55, 63, 64 y 65), p. 134. (www.bubok.es).

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Situation of the Cabezo de la Cobertura
(Courtesy of <http://carrahila.blogspot.com.es/>)

The excavated structures on the hilltop can only be explained as the storehouses of a fortified granary of Berber tradition; it dates back to the 13th century and to the period just before the Christian conquest.

The plateau of the *Cabezo*, some 30m by 40m wide, dominates the stream by 100m. With its steep slopes, its topography makes it possible to climb the site from the north-west side only; the other slopes are too steep. The layout of the site includes some 30 structures occupying the totality of the plateau; in the centre some place is left over for an open area, a cistern, and an oratory. Circulation inside the granary is possible through some pathways no wider than 60 to a 100 cm. In general, the buildings are rectangular in shape (4m to 5m by 1.50m to 2 m). Two types can be distinguished. A first group has a living quarter at the front of the cell and a storage box at the back separated from each other by a tiny vertically placed stone, which constitutes the 4th wall of the (grain) receptacle. A

small wooden door (max. 60cm) gave access to the inside. Often a large jar and a hearth were placed next to the door. A second group has no box, fireplace or jar; maybe this type of construction without the constructed storage box and living facilities was rather used to keep animals.



Plateau of the Cabezo de la Cobertura
(Courtesy of <http://carrahila.blogspot.com.es/>)



Pottery of the Cabezo de la Cobertura
(Courtesy of <http://carrahila.blogspot.com.es/>)

The refuge in Islamic Spain.

Except for the *Cabezo de la Cobertera*, the *agadir*-system has not been recognised in the archaeology of Islamic Spain where in general the most typical rural refuge area is the castral *albacar*²², a kind of large bailey. Castles as well as rural sites studies indicate that, e.g. at Uxò, Monte Marinet, la Magdalena, Silla and Montroy, some structures may have functioned as collective storerooms.

Conclusion

At the *Cabezo de la Cobertera* we have a rural community, which (in the absence of a refuge system set up by the state) organised its own protection. Let us remember that the *agadir* was born out of “the coincidence of a certain rural economy and the fear of war” and that the time of insecurity which characterises the Almohade period probably pushed the Muslims of the Ricotian *huerta* to build the fortified common granary of the *Cabezo de la Cobertera*.

The ethno-archaeological analysis of the storage systems in North-Africa shows that the site of the *Cabezo* needs to be explained as being of the *agadir*-type and as a site that corresponds to the normal rural settlement patterns of the Valle de Ricote and its cultivated fields irrigated by a string of *acequias* or water ditches, built and maintained by the inhabitants of a series of *alquerías* or hamlets located on the edges of the *regadío* or irrigated plots, situated along the stream itself but dominated and above all controlled by the castles that protected the passages through the valley and especially the barrages that deviated and supplied the water for the hydraulic system.»



Fortified Muslim granary of the Cabezo de la Cobertera

The granary had a guard, because it was a holy place, and enemies were not permitted to enter there. We saw the same phenomenon in the Catholic Church of Blanca, in the 16th century. If someone got into trouble with the law, he quickly ran into the church, and there, soldiers could not get anyone from the church, because that was a holy place. Currently, the site of "The Fortified Granary" is left with a most deteriorated state of preservation. In addition, the site has no element of protection, no fence or enclosure, although access is complex due to the terrain. It is located in the town of Abaran, in the province of Murcia. It has a total size of 1,575 m². Access is from the road connecting the towns of Blanca and Abaran.

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Situaton of Cabezo de Corona
(Courtesy of José Molina Ruiz)

9. The current name Darrax.

The name Aldarache

Firstly it is necessary to clear up the name of Aldarache that before 2002 was thought to be Monteagudo.

In 2000, Professor Juan Torres Fontes (1919-2013) provided a document dated 1244, where one finds the first reference to the village of Abarán. The document also refers to the farmstead Aldarache and its small castle²⁹⁹:

“el castillo de Aldarache con su villa e Favarel, que es allende el río, es contra Sieza, por heredad, con montes e con fuentes e con pastos....”

Translation:

The castle of Aldarache with its village and Abarán, that is near the river against Cieza as an inheritance, with mountains and with sources and with meadows..

According to Torres Fontes, Aldarache was the village of Monteagudo that is also mentioned in different documents as Alharache, Alabrache and Larache. However, *andarraya*, ancient word for the draughts game in Spain, derives from the Moroccan word *attarracha*³⁰⁰ with two

²⁹⁹ **AYALA MARTÍNEZ, Carlos de** (1995) Libro de Privilegios de la Orden de San Juan de Jerusalén en Castilla y León (s.s. XI-XV). Madrid, pp. 498-499.

TORRES FONTES, Juan (1995-1996) Del tratado de Alcaraz al de Almizra. De la tenencia al señorío (1243-1244) In: Miscelánea Medieval Murciana. Vol. XIX-XX, pp. 279-302. The document is to be found in pp. 297-298.

³⁰⁰ **WESTERVELD, Govert** (2003) La reina Isabel la Católica: su reflejo en la dama poderosa de Valencia, cuna del ajedrez moderno y

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“r” or from *attaracha* with one “r” and “arra” changed in “arrach”. Something similar we see here between *Andarraix* and *Aldarrax*, two ancient words of the farmstead *Darrax*, with the name of *Aldarache*.

These comments and the document of 1244 were put in the hands of the Chronicler of Abarán, José Molina David Templado, by means of an email. This was a rather important discovery of Torres Fontes because until those days the first document relating to Abarán was of the year 1281.

The idea was that Aldarache could be the name for Andarraix (1304)³⁰¹, Aldarrax (1588) and El Darrax in the XVI century. Today this area is simply called Darrax. It is clear that Aldarrax has similarity with Aldarache³⁰². One year thereafter, precisely in April 2003 Luis Lisón Hernández confirmed the same thinking and even added some more data³⁰³ when he is treating the term Darrax of 1591:

origen del juego de damas. Generalitat Valenciana, Secretaria Autònoma de Cultura, pp. 47-48. This is a Spanish edition. (Biblioteca of Blanca - Murcia). The Dutch edition is: **WESTERVELD, Govert** (1997) La influencia de la reina Isabel la Católica sobre la nueva dama poderosa en el origen del juego de las damas y el ajedrez moderno. Literatura española 1283-1700, pp. 70-71 (Biblioteca Regional de Murcia).

³⁰¹ **GIMÉNEZ SOLER, Andrés** (1907) Caballeros españoles en África en España. Spaniards, p. 58.

GIMÉNEZ SOLER, Andrés (1905-1907) Caballeros españoles en Africa y africanos en España, Revue Hispanique, vols. 12 i 16. p. 356.

³⁰² **WESTERVELD, Govert** (2001) Document in: Blanca “El Ricote de Don Quijote”. Expulsión y Regreso de los Moriscos del Último Enclave Islámico más grande de España. Blanca, pp. 1 and 5.

³⁰³ **LISON HERNÁNDEZ, Luis** (2002) Valle de Ricote (Murcia): Encomienda de la Orden de Santiago. En: V. Curso. Abarán: acercamiento a una realidad. Del 11 al 19 de abril de 2002. Centro de

«Nos parece que Aldarache podría ser Aldarrache o Al-Darrache, lo que le transformaría en el posterior y actual Darrax. El topónimo lo tenemos registrado en 1591 en que Hernando Carrillo, vecino de Abarán vende ciertas tierras “tras el castillico de Darrax; cuyo pago se intentó regar en 1604 elevando el agua del río por medio de una noria».

Translation:

It appears that Aldarache could be Aldarrache or Al-Darrache that later on was transformed to the present Darrax. The name we have registered in 1591 when Hernando de Carrillo, neighbour of Abarán, sold several lands “behind the small castle of Darrax, whose lands he tried to irrigate in 1604 elevating the water of the river by means of a water wheel.

Seeing that Lison does not refer to earlier works in this sense, it is clear that his work is independent. In 2005, Professor Alfonso Carmona González also does not refer to earlier publications. Therefore, his work is independent, too. The famous Arabist states³⁰⁴:

El topónimo *Aldarache* corresponde sin duda a la actual partida de Darrax, al norte de Blanca (en otro documento es llamado *Andaraix*), aunque ignoro si ha habido allí alguna vez un castillo. Su étimo más probable es *Al-darrag*, “el cardador”.

Translation:

The name Aldarache corresponds without doubt to the present area of Darrax, North of Blanca (in another document it is

Estudios Abaraneros., pp. 28 – 54. In p. 29. (In his conference of April 2002, he did not make any allusion to his article of Darrax in 2003)

³⁰⁴ **CARMONA GONZÁLEZ, Alfonso** (2005) El Valle de Ricote en época andalusí. III Congreso Turístico Cultural del Valle de Ricote “Despierta tus Sentidos”. Ojos, 25 y 26 de Noviembre, pp. 129-142. In p. 139.

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called Andaraix³⁰⁵). However, I ignore if there has ever been a castle. Its etymon is most likely Al-Darrag, "carder".

The origin of the name of Darrax.

Once established the area Aldarache in the literature, now another problem to be resolved is the origin of the name of Darrax. For that we have to consult another time the research of López Moreno.

According to the study of López Moreno³⁰⁶ the name of Darrax refers to a fraction of the Sninhāyâ Berber tribe, the Banu Darrāy (pronunciation / Darraj /), appearing as such in the Ŷamhara of Ibn Hazm (XI century). As an example of their settlement in Al-Andalus, Ahmad Al-Rāzi (X century) refers to the existence of a «causeway of the Banu Darrāy» in the present province of Castellon. The hispanoislamic poet Ibn Darrāy Al-Qastalli (*Cazalilla*, 958 – *Denia*, 1030) belonged to it. He was in the service of *Al-Mansur*.

By different ways one can appreciate in its phonetic evolution that the Ŷin was transcribed into the final position by the "ch". To it one added the support vowel "e" in the document of 1244, evolving into the other words to "x". In the Morisco period the Arabic definite article

³⁰⁵ ALONSO VILLA, Miguel Ángel (1991-1995) Gran Enciclopedia de la Región de Murcia, s.v. "Blanca".

³⁰⁶ LÓPEZ MORENO, Jesús Joaquín (2005) Poblamiento beréber en la zona norte del Valle de Ricote: Las alquerías andalusíes de Abarán y Darrax. In: Tercer Congreso Turístico Cultural del Valle de Ricote "Despierte tus Sentidos". Ojós, 25 y 26 de Noviembre de 2005. Edición Consorcio Turístico "Mancomunidad Valle de Ricote", pp. 355-389. Cites on pp. 374-376.

disappeared. It is clear that the script of "Aldarache" lacks an "r". Furthermore, that the "n" of Andarraix is equivalent to the "l" of the definite article and the "i" could be a clerical error or defect of copyists (Al- Darrāy > Aldar(r)ache > Aldarrax > Darrax).

One should highlight the Arabic form of the name of this tribe (of the words dār raî = "pleasure house"). It is possible that certain Arab names are among the Berbers as indicated by Pierre Guichard when referring to Darrāy. As already indicated, the Beber settlement in this farmstead is confirmed by the characteristics given in the fortified granuary, systematically excavated on the hill of the "La Cobertera".

Till here the article of López Moreno and one can add to these explanations the way of writing of the poet Ibn-Darrāğ Al-Qaṣṭallī. The following words were found:

Ibn-Darrāğ Al-Qaṣṭallī
Ibn Darray
Ibn Darrādj Al-Ḳaṣṭallī
Ibn Darrāğ
Ibn Darrāj
Ibn Darrāy

The birthplace of Ibn Sab'in.

The next problem to be resolved is the origin of the birth place of Ibn Sab'in. The fact that the biographers of Ibn Sab'in indicate the Ricote Valley as the birthplace of Ibn Sab'in and not Ricote might imply the possibility that this holy person was born in another village or farmstead. A

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holy farmstead in those times was Al-Darrax as we have seen in previous pages.

However, somebody wrote about this possibility? Moreover, thinking in this way one comes after research to an unpublished article of Jesús Joaquín López Moreno³⁰⁷, written in the year 2004. It begins to state that the name Esteban Lator³⁰⁸ gives to the sufí Ibn Sab'in, is as follows:

Muhyi Al-din Abu Muhammad Abd Al-Haqq b. Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Nasr b. Muhammad Al-Mursi Al-Riquti Al-Isbili Al-Sufi Qutb Al-din b. Al-Dara b. Sab'in.

The similarity between "Al-Dara" and "Al-Darache" as appearing in 1244 and referring to the Islamic farmstead Andarraix (Darrax)³⁰⁹, left no doubt. The geographical specificity of Murcia and Ricote proves it. The more, when in times of political stability, the land of Darrax was an Islamic *qarya* of the *hisn* of Ricote. In its turn the hisn of Ricote was the *madina* district of Murcia, capital of the *Kura of Tudmir*.

Thanks to Esteban Lator we know the meaning that the Arab author Al-Maqqari (1578-1632) gave to the word "dara", when referring to the name of our philosopher Ibn Sab'in. It was none other than the circle equating "dara" to

³⁰⁷ **LÓPEZ MORENO, Jesús Joaquín** (2004) Ibn Al-Dara Ibn Sab'in. Máxima expresión de la Cultura Valricotí. (Unpublished).

³⁰⁸ **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'arif. In: Al-Andalus, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 373.

³⁰⁹ **LÓPEZ MORENO, Jesús Joaquín** (2003) "El granero fortificado islámico de Andarraix: un posible reclamo turístico y cultural para el Valle de Ricote", *II Congreso Turístico Cultural del Valle de Ricote. Blanca, 14, 15 y 16 Nov. 2003*, Abarán (Murcia), pp. 63-74.

"Sab'in" (= 70) in the *rumi* notation³¹⁰. This same method, circle equal to seventy, was also used by Georges S. Colin³¹¹ when he spoke of 27 numerical absolute value symbols called *rumies*. On the other hand, José A. Sánchez Pérez picked up 50 *rumi* figures in a manuscript of El Escorial³¹².

As observed by Al-Maqqari, the nickname "Ibn Sab'in" equals "Ibn Al-Dara" and the latter would mean "Son of

³¹⁰ Using these figures in the Peninsula is documented from the late twelfth century. About the origin, identification and other information about these figures please refer to:

GONZÁLEZ PALENCIA, A. (1930) *Los mozárabes de Toledo de los siglos XII y XIII*, vol. IV, Madrid, especially p. 48.

LABARTA, A. and BARCELÓ, C. (1988) *Números y cifras en los documentos arábigo-hispanos*, Córdoba, Universidad.

MARTÍNEZ RUIZ, J. (1991) Catorce recibos bilingües (árabe-español) de impuesto de farda en el Archivo de la Alhambra (1511-1564) In. *Homenaje al Prof. Jacinto Bosch Vilá*, Granada, Universidad, vol. I, pp. 599-618.

SERGHINI MOHAMED (1985) L'expose critique de la pensée Musulmane a travers Ibn Sab'in. These présentée pour l'obtention du doctorat D'Etat es-Lettres. Université de Paris IV. Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences humaines. Sorbonne. 3 Volumes. In: Vol. I, p. 16.

³¹¹ **COLIN, G. S.** (1933) De l'origine grecque des 'chiffres de Fès' et de nos 'chiffres arabes'. In. *Journal Asiatique* 222, pp. 193-215.

³¹² **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'tarif. In: *Al-Andalus*, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 373.

See also the article of **SÁNCHEZ PÉREZ, José A.** (1935) Sobre las cifras rumīes. In: *Al-Andalus*, III, pp. 97-125, where, apart from appreciating the circle equi-valence = seventy, he informed us, citing Colin, that these particular signs, which have absolute value, are of Greek descent. These symbols later moved to Egypt, then to Muslim Spain, and to Morocco. Furthermore, from Muslim Spain he states that "from the late twelfth century one could find the symbols in the Mozarabic documents (from Toledo) published by González Palencia. Another indication is the script that Ibn Sab'in († 1269) gave to his name.

AHMED MOHAMMED AL-MAQQARI (1855) *Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne* (1855-1861, 2 vols. In Arabic), Vol. I. p. 591, 1. 2. (Ibidem, 97-99)

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The Circle." With that comes to mind the circle that traces the top of the Cerro de la Cobertera on the horizon.

The top could be much more highlighted if the remaining walls of the fortified granary were still intact. However, these walls gradually crumble to the point when the shape of their ruins reminded of a crown from a passerby's view which is why the name "La Corona" was given to this plot of land of Abarán.

The name "Al-Dara" would also be given to the Islamic farmhouse nearby the rounded shape of the top of the Cerro de la Cobertera. There people established their small fortification. In later years the names "Al-Darache", "Andarraix", "Aldarrax" and "Darrax" were added.

Summing up the following points one can deduce that the great Murcian Muslim scholar came from Islamic Darrax:

- The resemblance of the forms "Al-Darache" and "Al-Dara";
- A comparison of the meaning "Circle" with the roundness of the top of Cobertera;
- Equivalence of the nickname "Ibn Al-Dara" / "Ibn Sab'in";
- Birthplace in the Valley of Ricote.

Up to here are revealed the most important points of the hypothesis of Jesús Joaquín López Moreno³¹³.

³¹³ About the rumi numbers, in addition to the cited works please see:
LEVI DELIA VIDA, G. (1934) Appunti e quesiti di storia letteraria araba. In: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 14, pp. 281-283.

REY, Abel (1935) À propos de l'origine grecque des «chiffres de Fès» et de nos «chiffres arabes». In: *Revue des Études Grecques*, tome 48, fascicle 228, Octobre-décembre, pp. 525-539.

For writing his name Ibn Sab'in used the number "Ibn 0", and this is where his nickname of Ibn Dara³¹⁴ comes from. According to the rumi numbers "0" means seventy. Colin states³¹⁵:

It is even the use of Greek numeral in Arabic Spain of the thirteenth century that helps us understand the detail of the biography of the curious Hispanic Theosophist Ibn Sab'in (d. 1269). The name Ibn Sab'in literally means "son of the Seventy". In his *Nafh at Tib*, Al-Makkari has preserved the following remark: "Ibn Sab'in wrote his name as Ibn O, tracing the circle (dara) that looks like a zero. In one of the numerical methods of the Magribins it is 70. That is why he became famous by the name of *Ibn Dara* "the son of the circle". However, the small circle in question is the omicron in the series of Greek numeral as the one in the "numerals of Fez", which corresponds to 70.

On the other hand, Colins finishes his article stating:

RITTER, H. (1936) Griechisch-Koptische ziffern in Arabischen manuskripten. In: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 16, pp. 212-213, followed by a note of Levi Delia Vida.

³¹⁴ **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'tarif. In: *Al-Andalus*, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 373.

³¹⁵ **COLIN, G. S.** (1933) De l'origine grecque des 'chiffres de Fès' et de nos 'chiffres arabes'. In. *Journal Asiatique* 222, pp. 193-215. Cited by In pp. 204-205.

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Greek Numerals

α, β, γ, δ, ε, ζ, η, θ	1000	α, β, γ, δ, ε, ζ, η, θ	100	ρ, σ, τ, υ, φ, χ, ψ, ω, π	10	ι, κ, λ, μ, ν, ξ, ο, π, ρ, σ	1	α, β, γ, δ, ε, ζ, η, θ	11	ια, ιβ, ιγ, ιδ, ιε, ις, ιζ, ιη, ιθ	11	κα, κβ, κγ, κδ, κε, κς, κζ, κη, κθ	21	λα, λβ, λγ, λδ, λε, λς, λζ, λη, λθ	31	μα, μβ, μγ, μδ, με, μς, μζ, μη, μθ	41	να, νβ, νγ, νδ, νε, νς, νζ, νη, νθ	51	ξα, ξβ, ξγ, ξδ, ξε, ξς, ξζ, ξη, ξθ	61	οα, οβ, ογ, οδ, οε, ος, οζ, οη, οθ	71	πα, πβ, πγ, πδ, πε, πς, πζ, πη, πθ	81	ια, ιβ, ιγ, ιδ, ιε, ις, ιζ, ιη, ιθ	91
	2000		200		20		2		12		12		22		32		42		52		62		72		82		92
	3000		300		30		3		13		13		23		33		43		53		63		73		83		93
	4000		400		40		4		14		14		24		34		44		54		64		74		84		94
	5000		500		50		5		15		15		25		35		45		55		65		75		85		95
	6000		600		60		6		16		16		26		36		46		56		66		76		86		96
	7000		700		70		7		17		17		27		37		47		57		67		77		87		97
	8000		800		80		8		18		18		28		38		48		58		68		78		88		98
	9000		900		90		9		19		19		29		39		49		59		69		79		89		99

1. That the twenty-seven signs that constitute the “numerals of Fes” are the current representatives of the Greek alphabetic-numerical series, dating back over twenty-five centuries;
2. Arabs had to borrow these figures from the Hellenistic civilization in Egypt (or Syria), and introduced them to Muslim Spain, from where they went to Morocco.

These Greek numerals came from Egypt to Spain and were referred to as letters or writing register (*zimam*). Dozy gives multiple references with regards to the special value that the word *zimam* had in Arab Spain. It was a register in which people wrote their revenues and expenses. Some are *zimam* ciphers, the same as those used for numerals by government officials and accountants.

The *zimam* letters are twenty-seven signs that have the numerical values from one to nine in units, tens, and hundreds. They are supposed to be of Greek-Coptic origin and were used in the accountancy of the State³¹⁶. Ibn Sab'in's father was a local administrator³¹⁷ and maybe Ibn Sab'in learned accounting and the use of *zimam* from him.

Abellah El Moussaquitaib³¹⁸ also refers to seventy, but in this case explains the name Ibn Sab'in. He is probably the only one who has done so. It is found in the epistle entitled Al-Nuriya (light)³¹⁹ and another entitled Al-Ihata (the

³¹⁶ COLIN, G. S. (1933) De l'origine grecque des 'chiffres de Fès' et de nos 'chiffres arabes'. In. *Journal Asiatique* 222, pp. 193-215. Cited by In p. 205.

³¹⁷ LAGERLUND, Henrik (2011) Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy Between 500 and 1500, Canada, p. 508.

³¹⁸ EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah (2014) El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Dissertation, p. 32 for complete information.

³¹⁹ 'ABDULḤAQQ IBN SAB'IN (1965) Risala Al-Nuriya. In: Maymu' Rasa 'il (manuscript of the Library Taymuriyya, with the number 149, issue «Taṣawwuf», Dar Al-kutub Al-Qawmiyya), edition 'Abd Al-Raḥman Badawi. Cairo, p. 184.

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global knowledge)³²⁰. In the first case Ibn Sab'in called himself "slave of God, the son of the degrees of repentance of the Prophet³²¹" and the mystic manifested himself in this way: «This is a document in which one told the truth and in which appeared the truth; Abdu-l-Haqq revealed it [...]. Unanimously, one based the fame of the Creator multiplying seven by ten³²².»

‘Ali Darourge³²³ indicates that the circle O = ϵ . The circle (O-Al-da'ira) in Al-Qamus Al-Muhit, it is said that Al-da'ira is what surrounds the thing (ϵ). This letter (ϵ) noted the number 70 in the literal count. Thus, (Ibn O) = ϵ = number 70 ie "Ibn 70 Ibn Sab'in".

Jelaluddin Rumi³²⁴ (1207-1273) was a Persian poet, jurist, theologian, and Sufi mystic. He was born in Balkh, in what is now Afghanistan. He was in different towns, among them Baghdad, Damascus and Mece. Rumi's major work is the *Maṭnawiye Ma'nawi*, a six-volume poem regarded by some Sufis as the Persian-language Qur'an. It has been translated into English³²⁵ and considered by

³²⁰ **IBN SAB'IN** (1965) *Risala Al-Ihata*, edition of ‘Abd Al-Rahman Badawi. Cairo, pp. 23-24.

³²¹ **EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah** (2014) *El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin*, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Dissertation, p. 32.

³²² **IBN SAB'IN** (1965) *Risala Al-Ihata*, edition of ‘Abd Al-Rahman Badawi. Cairo, p. 474.

³²³ by **‘ALIE DAHROUGE** (1983) *Le probleme de l'âme chez Ibn Sab'in. Étude analytique du Budd Al-‘Arif*. Thèse pour le Doctorat de 3ème Cycle. Université de Paris I. Pantheon-Sorbonne, p. 16.

³²⁴ **SCHIMMEL, Annemarie** (1994) *The Mystery of Numbers*. Oxford University Press.

³²⁵ **NICHOLSON, Reynold Alleyne** (1925) *The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí*. Edited from the oldest manuscripts available: with critical notes, translation, & commentary by Reynolds Alleyne Nicholson (1868-1945) Cambridge.

many to be one of the greatest works of mystical poetry. It contains approximately 27000 lines of Persian poetry. Rumi lived in the time of Ibn Sab'in and consequently the Sufis of the Ricote Valley could have heard of him.

The peripatetic philosopher and Sufi called himself Ibn Dara. *Dara* here means a circle or ring or the halo round the moon, which is said to signify the number of zero and according to the *kadi* of Granada, Muhammad b. Ahmad (d. 760/1358-9), was said to correspond to the figure of seventy. In line with some methods of calculation it corresponds to the figure of seventy³²⁶.

MUHAMMAD IBN YA'QUB AL-SIRAZI AL-FIRUZABADI (1289/1871) *Al-Qamus Al-Muhit. Al-Qahira, Matba'at Al-Amira*, 1289 (1871), 2nd edition, Vol. 5, p. 345.

³²⁶ **HANIF, N.** (2002) *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis: Africa and Europe*, p. 77.

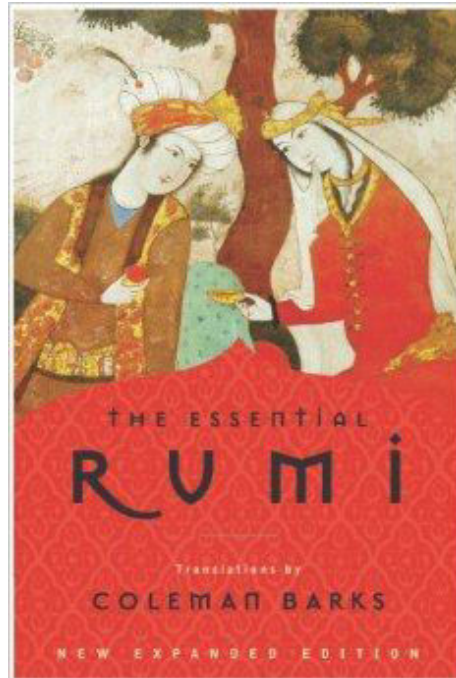
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Jalal ad-Din Rumi gathers Sufi mystics.

As Professor Johnny de Meulemeester observed, the *agadir* or granary is sacred just like a saint's tomb or a mosque. No wrong doings are committed in the granary: no thefts, no trickery, no adultery, no lies or murder; the granary is inviolable and constitutes an asylum. The sacred nature might emanate from different sources. So it might originate from protection from a marabout or other religious personages³²⁷. These are the saints of Islam. However, on the other hand, it is quite likely that the substrata of this belief are older than Islam itself.

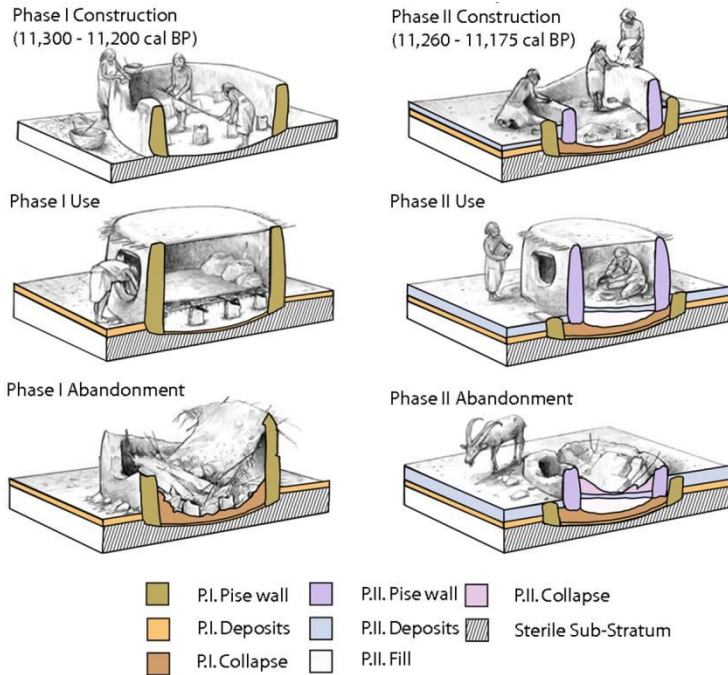
³²⁷ **JAQUES-MEUNIER, D.** (1949) Greniers collectifs. In: Hesperis (Archives Berbères et Bulletin de L'Institut des Hautes Études Marocaines), XXXVI, 1-2, pp. 97-138, p. 111.



Grain is sacred in itself, because it is the source of life. So is it acceptable that it is the stored grain itself that lends its magic power and the sacred inviolability it causes to the granary. When deals were concluded inside the granary, it was certainly done there to give the contracts this sacred protection. It is also meaningful that most of the agadirs were accommodated in a mosque, which emphasises the religious significance³²⁸.

³²⁸ **MEULEMEESTER, Johnny de** (2003) The Cabezo de la Cobertera (Valle de Ricote, Murcia) and the Fortified Granaries From the Maghreb to Central Europe. In: II Congreso Turístico Cultural del Valle de Ricote: "Despierta tus sentidos". Blanca, 14, 15, 16 de Noviembre de 2003. Compilación de ponencias / coord. por M^a Cruz Gómez Molina, José María Sánchez Ortiz de Villajos, pp. 41-56, p. 45.

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Life-history of Structure 4 granary Dhra', Jordan. This illustration shows the cyclical process of construction, use, and abandonment over several hundred years. (Illustration by E. Carlson).

¿Dara has to do with “Dhra” of the word *bab Al-dhra*? Recent excavations at Dhra' near the Dead Sea in Jordan provide strong evidence for sophisticated purpose-built granaries in a predomestication context³²⁹. Another point

³²⁹ **KUIJT, Ian and FINLAYSON, Bill** (2009) Evidence for Food Storage and Predomestication Granaries 11,000 Years Ago in the Jordan Valley. Edited by Ofer Bar-Yosef, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. (10966–10970 _ PNAS _ July 7, 2009 _ vol. 106 _ no. 27)

can be added to the hypothesis of López Moreno. La Corona is one of the sacred granaries that were built by the indigenous Berber tribes. The impressive structure of La Corona holds significant spiritual value and is defining a landmark of the region's cultural inheritance and religious history. This type of fortresses served as both a symbol of freedom and a holy site for the Berber people.

To finish this chapter it is worthwhile knowing that Esteban Lator³³⁰ reproduced the complete name of Ibn Sab'in as figuring in the *Onomasticon arabicum*³³¹, except the nisba *Al-Marquti*, that there should be a confusion of *Al-Riquti*. In the record cards used by the authors of the *Onomasticon* one reads of *Al-Marquti* and on another occasion *Al-Marfuti*. The book *Ihata* adds: *Al-'Akki*.

³³⁰ **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'tarif. In: *Al-Andalus*, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 373.

³³¹ **CAETANI, LEONE & GABRIELI, GIUSEPPE** (1915) *Onomasticon arabicum*, ossia Repertorio alfabetico dei nomi di persona e di luogo contenuti nelle principali opere storiche, biografiche e geografiche, stampate e manoscritte, relative all'Islām, compilato per cura di Leone Caetani e Giuseppe Gabrieli. Casa editrice italiana, Roma, II, p. 234.

10. Wadi Riqut

Ibn Sab'in was born into a prominent Murcian family around 1217 in Ricote³³², a town bordering the Segura River, north-west of Murcia. Other historians state Valle de Ricote a translation for Wadi Riqut³³³. At the time the region of Valle de Ricote covered the places of Fauaran

³³² **SPALLINO, Patrizia** (2002) Ibn Sab'in. Le questioni siciliane. Federico II e l'universo filosofico. Palermo, p. 33. Cited by:

AKASOY, Anna Ayse (2006) Die Sizilianischen Fragen des Ibn Sab'in Philosophie und Mystik in der späten Almohadenzeit. Ph.D. Dissertation. Philosophie im Fachbereich Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften der Johan-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, p. 4.

SPALLINO, Patrizia (2002) Le Categorie aristoteliche nella problematica dell'unità secondo Ibn Sab'in. In: La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale. Filologia, storia, dottrina. Atti del Seminario nazionale di studi, Napoli-Sorrento, 29-31 ottobre 1998, a cura di Baffoni C. Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria, pp. 167-177.

SPALLINO, Patrizia (2007) Les questions siciliennes de Ibn Sab'in, nouvelles perspectives de recherche. In: Schede Medievali 45: pp. 95-102.

SPALLINO, Patrizia (2009) Le langage philosophique de l'empereur Frédéric II dans les Questions siciliennes de Ibn Sab'in et L'Aiguillon des disciples de Ja'aqov Anatoli. In: Le Plurilinguisme au Moyen Age. Orient-Occident. De Babel à la langue une, textes édités par Kappler C. Thiolier-Méjean S. L'Harmattan, Paris, pp. 133-145.

AKASOY, Anna Ayse (2003) Ibn Sab'in's Sicilian Questions: the Text, Its Sources, and Their Historical Context. In: Al-Qantara 29, 1: pp. 115-146.

AKASOY, Anna Ayse (2005) Las Cuestiones Sicilianas de Ibn Sab'in. Filosofía y mística en la época Almohade (resumen de la tesis doctoral). In: Aljamía, 17, pp 92-95.

AKASOY, Anna Ayse (2005) Ibn Sab'in. Die Sizilianischen Fragen. Arabisch-Deutsch. Basel.

³³³ **LATOR, Stefan** (1944) Ibn Sab'in de Murcia y su Budd Al 'tarif. En: Al-Andalus, 1944-2, pp. 371-417. In p. 379.

(today Abarán), Al-Darrax, Negra, Oxos (today Ojós) Ricote, Oleya (today Ulea), and Asnete (today Villanueva de Segura).

In this sense it is interesting to note the observations of Knysh³³⁴ who refers to the anonymous “people of Wadi Riquit” when he compares the doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi with others:

Nevertheless, the doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers is, in Ibn Al-Khatib’s view, closer to Islam than that of absolute unity, espoused by Abu ‘Abdallah Al-Shudhi, Ibn Dahhaq (d. 611/1214), Ibn Sab’in (d. 669/1270), Al-Shushtari (d. 668/1269), Ibn Mutarrif Al-Judhami Al-A’ama, the blind (d. 688/1289), and the anonymous “people of Wadi Riquit”.

Under the fifth category in his famous manuscript Ibn Al-Khatib states the extremists, partisans of the *Wahda Mutlaqa*: Shudhi, Ibn Dihag, Ibn Sab’in, Shushtari, Ibn Mutarrif, Ibn Ahla, Al-Hajj Maghribi (var.: ‘Urani), the people of Wadi Riquit near Murcia³³⁵.

Pierre Guichard also states that the inhabitants of *Wadi Riquit* adhered to an extremist mystical doctrine known as *Wahda mutlaqa*. In the origins of the Hudí revolt one

³³⁴ **KNYSH, Alexander** (1999) *Ibn ‘Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*. State University of New York, p. 183.

SEZGIN, Fuat (1999) *Ibn Sab’in (d.c. 1269) and his Philosophical Correspondence With the Emperor Frederick II. Texts and Studies*. Collected and Reprinted. (Islamic Philosophy; 80) Frankfurt am Main.

³³⁵ **MASSIGNON, L.** (1982) *The Passion of Al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*. 4 Vols. Translated from the French by H. Mason, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Vol. II, p. 331.

MASSIGNON, Louis (1975) *La Passion de Hosayn b. Mansour Hallaj: martyr mystique de l’Islam exécuté à Baghdad le 26 mars 922*: 4 vols., New ed., Bibliothèque des Idées, Paris, Gallimard.

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simultaneously finds certain religious and violent features suggesting mysticism, perhaps a popular context. The prophets had announced the appearance of Ibn Hud who presented himself as a providential personage. He said: «I am – he says to his first companions – the Time Lord and I will be who will again pronounce juba on behalf of the Abbasids³³⁶.»

Backed by the astrologer Ibn Hud could present himself as a providential personage. Ibn Húd³³⁷ descended from Al-mustain Ibn Húd, the fourth Sultán of Saragossa of the dynasty called the Beni Húd. According to Ibnu-l-Khattib the cause of his revolt was as follows: at about the time when the dynasty of the Almohades began to show visible signs of decay there prevailed an impression among the people of Murcia and other cities in the east of Andalus that the power of their African rulers was shortly to be overthrown by a man named Mohammed Ibn Yúsuf, who would rise in arms against them, expel them from the country, and restore the Mohammedan empire to its pristine power and splendour.

Yousef Alexander Casewit³³⁸ gives more information about the biography of Ibn Sab'in stating that «Ibn Sab'in traces his lineage to the Prophet Mohammad through 'Ali

³³⁶ **GUICHARD, Pierre** (2001) *Al-Andalus frente a la conquista cristiana: los Musulmanes de Valencia*. Biblioteca Nueva. Universidad de València, p. 169.

³³⁷ **Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Maqqari, Ibn Al-Khatib** (1843) *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain: Extracted from the Nafhu-t-tib min ghosni-l-andalusi-r-rattib wa tárkh lisánu-d-dín Ibni-l-khattib*, by Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Al-Makkari. Translated by Pascual de Gayangos. In two volumes.

³³⁸ **CASEWIT, Yousef Alexander** (2008) *The Objective of Metaphysics in Ibn Sab'in's Answers to the Sicilian Questions*. In: *Iqbal Review* (Pakistan), Vol. 49, N° 2, pp. 1-6.

Ibn Abi Talib. He also refers to the Ricote Valley as followers of Hermeticism:

Muslim Hermetists: Among the Sufi Hermetists we find Abu ‘Abdallah Al-Shudhi of Seville, Ibn Mutarrif the Blind of Murcia, Muhammad Ibn Ahla of Lorca and Al-Ĥajj Yasin Al-Maghribi. In *La Voie et la Loi*, (pp. 279-80) Ibn Khaldun³³⁹ notes that “a large group of people from eastern Spain and the Ricote Valley” were followers of Hermeticism.

The writing style of Ibn Sab’in is quite obscure and mystical and the Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy most aptly describes his language³⁴⁰:

The language is full of expressions that are not easy to translate. Ibn Sab’in's passion for science and white magic prompted him to use extremely peculiar sentences. Often the logic of his arguments is interrupted by Sufi concepts that were not always understood by his contemporaries. In order to fully understand the complexity of Ibn Sab’in's writings the reader is forced to acquire information not only from the classical texts of Islamic culture, but also from the fundamental texts of Jewish, Christian, Persian, and Hellenic thought. On the one hand, the difficulties in understanding Ibn Sab’in's style as well as the several accusations of heresies explain the reason why Ibn Sab’in's works were not very popular among scholars. On the other hand, Ibn Sab’in's aim was not to write popular philosophical works, rather the contrary.

³³⁹ **IBN KHALDUN** (1991) *La Voie et la Loi: ou, Le Maître et le juriste*. Sindbad, pp. 279-280.

See also: **URVOY, Dominique** (1972) *Une étude sociologique des mouvements religieux dans l’Espagne musulmane de la chute du califat au milieu du XIII^e siècle*. In: *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*. Tome 8, pp. 223-293. There is a nice development scheme of the Sufis on p. 79.

³⁴⁰ **LAGERLUND, Henrik** (2011) *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, Canada, p. 511.

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There is a link between the Wadi Riqut Sufism and Hudí dynasty. The proof is an emir named Badr Al-Din Hasan Ibn Hud (633-699 H/ 1236-1300 CE), grandnephew of Ibn Hud Al-Mutawakkil, who was the head of the Sufi sect of Sab'iniyya at Damascus in the second half of the thirteenth century. At that time there were two other Sufis who belonged to the sect of Sab'iniyya. The first one was *shayk* Al-Kashani Al-Fargani (d. 1300) who was a pupil of Sadr Al-Din Al-Qunawi. The second one was the mystic poet 'Afif Al-Din Sulayman Al-Tilimsani (1212-1291) who met Ibn Sab'in in Cairo. The founder of the movement in Damascus was Ibn Sab'in of the Wadi Riqut. As already indicated on another page, Pierre Guichard's observation that both Ibn Sab'in as the Hudí emir of Damascus seem to come from a specific political-religious context of Murcia and the Murcia region is correct. The core of the movement was probably in the Wadi Riqut where the Riqut Sufis could practice their religion unhindered. Taking into account this important link we have added some details of the Sufi Hasan b. Hud in other pages too.

Probably the whole matter had to do with the promised Messiah and Mahdi³⁴¹ awaited by Muslims. In this respect the Sufi doctrine of Ibn Sab'in is forged. Among his objectives was the social reform of the *umma*, which should be headed by an *imam* of exemplary justice. In this way, the community could become an ideal city that is,

³⁴¹ **AZIZ AL-AZMEH** (2003) *Ibn Khaldun: An Essay in Reinterpretation*. Central European University Press. New York, p. 81. **MARQUET, Yves** (1987) *Ibn Haldun et les conjonctions de Saturne et de Jupiter*. In: *Studia Islamica*, N° 65, pp. 91-96. In p. 94.

according to God through his well directed leader or *Mahdi*³⁴².

Some of his disciples considered the mystic and philosopher Ibn Sab'in a Mahdi. One of his followers, Yahya b. Ahmad b. Sulayman, composed a book titled *Al-Wirata Mubammadya wa Al-Fusul adh-dhatya*, where he supports that Ibn Sab'in is the expected Mahdi. He states three facts to support his thesis: Ibn Sab'in is not only a Qurayshite, but he is also a Hashimite-Alaouite. Ibn Sab'in is a Maghrebi and the author reminds that a celebrated hadith says "Maghreb people will not cease to be on the way until the arrival of the Hour". Finally, Ibn Sab'in possessed gifts of clairvoyance and prescience which brings him closer to the prophets³⁴³.

³⁴² **FIERRO BELLO, Maribel** (1999) Doctrinas y movimientos de tipo mesiánico en Al-Andalus. In: Milenarismos y milenaristas en la Europa medieval: IX Semana de Estudios Medievales, Nájera, 1998. Coord. Por José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte, pp. 159-176. In p. 171. See also:

FIERRO BELLO, Maribel (1994) Mahdisme et eschatologie dans Al-Andalus. In: A. Kaddouri. Madhisme. Crise et changement dans l'histoire du Maroc. Actes de la table ronde organisée à Marrakech para la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Rebat du 11 au 14 Février 1993. Rabat, pp. 47-69.

³⁴³ **FERHAT, Halima** (1994) Littérature eschatologique et espace sacré au Maroc: Le cas de Massa. In: Studia Islamica, N° 80, pp. 47-56. In p. 52.

11. Ricote, the revolt place of Ibn Húd?

The six villages in the Ricote Valley are: Abarán, Blanca, Ojos, Ricote, Ulea and Villanueva de Segura. Ricote is the most ancient village of the Ricote Valley and this was the revolt place of Ibn Húd, according to most historians.

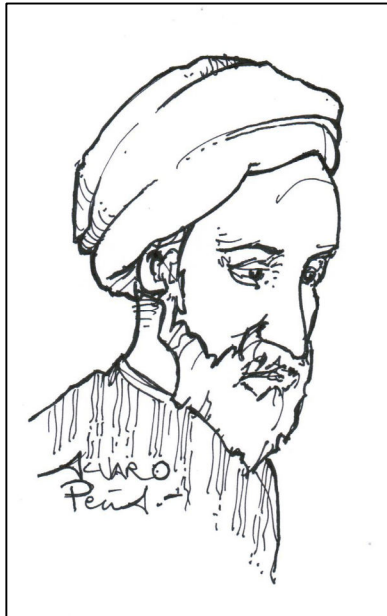
Ibn Húd³⁴⁴ descended from Al-mustain Ibn Húd, fourth Sultán of Saragossa of the dynasty called the Beni Húd. According to Ibnu-l-khattib the cause of his revolt was as follows: at about the time that the dynasty of the Almohades began to show visible signs of decay there prevailed an impression among the people of Murcia and other cities in the east of Andalus that the power of their African rulers was shortly to be overthrown by a man named Mohammed Ibn Yúsuf, who would rise in arms against them, expel them from the country, and restore the Mohammedan empire to its pristine power and splendour.

Other authors assert that it was an astrologer³⁴⁵ who communicated that information to one of the Almohades,

³⁴⁴ **AHMAD IBN MUHAMMAD MAQQARI, IBN AL-KHATIB** (1843) *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain: Extracted from the Nafhu-t-tif min ghosni-l-andalusi-r-rattif wa tarikh lisánu-d-din Ibni-l-khattib*, by Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Al-Makkarí. Translated by Pascual de Gayangos. In two volumes.

³⁴⁵ Finally, note that superstition and visions occupied an imperative role at the time in the history of Spain. They generated behaviors affected for better or worse the psyche of its leaders. For example, Pedro I, who was abused in his youth, always distrusted his brothers and many of his people. His psychotic disorders caused him to suppose that the whole world was against him, which was why he ended up killing everyone. He probably he did not trust anyone and accepted counsel only of Jewish astrologers or seers. Every time the

saying, "There will soon rise in this country against you a man from the ranks of the army whose name will be "Mohammed Ibn Yúsuf" and that by order of the prince, to whom the information was communicated a strict search was done all over Andaluz, when all those who bore that name were put to death without mercy, and among them a citizen of Jaen.



Ibn Hud
Courtesy of: (c) Álvaro Peña

King could eliminate his brother Enrique IV of Castile, he did not do so. Pedro I was brave in killing his brothers. But when it came to his brother Henry, the King hesitated. Visions also occupied an important role in the kingdom of Aragon. Prince Pedro of Aragon was a real visionary. The same thing happened in France: the King Carlos V, husband of Jeanne de Bourbon, sister Blanche of Bourbon, was an astrologer. The wife of Duguesclin, the constable who helped Enrique to kill his brother Don Pedro I, was an astrologer.

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They add that Ibn Húd was initially not aware either of the existing prophecy or of the orders issued for the apprehension of all those bearing a name similar to this.

One day a wise man dressed in the garb of a faquir came up to him in Murcia and said: "Why art thou still here? Dost thou not know -that a kingdom awaits thee? Away, away! Look for Al-Kashi, and he will "pave thee the way to power." This Al-kashi was nothing more than a celebrated brigand who, at the head of a few desperadoes, infested the ronda about Murcia and practised all manner of cruelties and extortions upon the country people or travelers who fell into his hands.

On the ninth of Rejeb of the year 625 (June 13, A. D. 1228), Ibn Húd left Murcia secretly and joined Al-Kashí, to whom he imparted what the faquir had told him. The brigand chief received him kindly and, as he knew him to be descendant of kings, had no difficulty in giving up to him the command of his small force. Shortly afterward the two chiefs, having made an incursion into the Christian territory, returned to their usual haunts with many captives and rich booty, which being divulged soon brought them numbers of adventurers anxious to enlist themselves under their banners. Little by little Ibn Húd's partisans increased and he began to seeing himself at the head of a respectable force. Thereafter he made himself be proclaimed by his men at a place called As-sokheyráh' in the neighbourhood of Murcia.

Upon the news of this rebellion Sid Abú-l-'abbás, at the time governor of Murcia, left the city at the helm of formidable forces and attacked Ibn Húd, but was defeated with great loss and obliged to return to the seat of his government. Shortly thereafter the inhabitants of Murcia

rose against their governor, expelled him and his Almohades, and proclaimed Ibn Húd -who repaired thither at the head of his forces and made his triumphant entry at the end of 625 or beginning of 626-, the ruler. Denia, Xatiba, and other cities of the east of Andalus soon followed the example of Murcia.



**Madrasa Al-Mustansiriya – Baghdad built by the caliph
Al-Mustansir**

Ibn Hud himself reduced Granada, Malaga, and Almería; and towards the close of the year 626 (Nov. A. D. 1229), Cordova, Jaen, and other important cities also sent their allegiances to him. Seeing himself as the sole master of Andalus, Ibn Hud did not hesitate to assume the title of Amíru-l-moslemin (commander of the Moslems), and to dispatch an embassy to Al-mustanser Al-‘abbásí. The reigning Khalif at Baghdad requested to be allowed to hold his dominions from him, and to mention his name in the public prayers. Ibnu-l-khattáb relates that the ambassadors returned to Andalus in 631 (beginning Oct. 6, A. D. 1233), bringing a favourable answer from the Khalif

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Al-Mustansir, together with a letter granting Ibn Húd the investiture of all the dominions which he then held or might acquire in future. That Sultán was then at Granada, and he ordered that the letters of the Khalif should be read to the people, which was done in the principal mosque of the place.

Ibn Húd himself was present at the ceremony, and he stood dressed in the sable uniform [of the 'Abbássides], holding in his right hand a black banner. The day when the ceremony took place happened to be one in which prayers for rain had just been said, and that no sooner was the Khalif's letter read to the people than the sky was suddenly obscured by clouds, and rain began to fall in torrents. On this occasion Ibn Hud assumed the honorary surname of Al-mutawakkel 'ala-illah (he who relies on God).

It goes without saying, that in those years the Ricote Valley played a very important role in Al-Andalus.

Who was the wise man, dressed in the garb of a faquir?

Here are some words about the wise man dressed in the garb of a faquir. Was it Abubéquer Mohámed Benahmed 'el Ricotí el Mursí or Ibn Sab'in? Probably it was Ibn Sab'in, seeing his tendency to be with important leaders, among them the Sharif of Mecca, Abu Numay Ibn Abi Sa'id.

For that, we should follow Massignon with regards to the Ibn Sab'in's political thinking that has led contemporary

authors to the assumption that Ibn Sab'in proclaimed messianic doctrines³⁴⁶:

Aux grades successifs, o pour l'individu, dans l'ascension, correspond une hiérarchie de rangs simultanés, dans la société á réformer dans l'Umma musulmane et dans les autres Communautés, juive et chrétienne. Là aussi, Ibn Sab'in tente une méthode d'approche philosophique. Il a, lui aussi, son utopie de la Cité Idéale, attire à la «conformation» à Dieu à travers son Chef «bien dirigé», «Mahdi». Contre les Ismaéliens, il ne croit pas au système aveugle de la discipline de l'arcane, imposée par une oligarchie spirituelle; il ne croit pas non plus à l'efficacité d'une rationalisation élémentaire de la Loi révélée, réduite à une hygiène externe; les Sab'iniyens pensent que la souffrance des masses prend de plus en plus conscience de la Sainteté de Dieu, grâce á la compassion participante de ses Chefs dans l'épreuve. Il s'agit donc, pour le Muhaqqiq, de trouver des Chefs pour la Communauté, et qui soient justes.

Where raised exactly Ibn Hud the standard of revolt?

In recent years a young researcher named Jesús Joaquín López Moreno has done much research in the Ricote Valley. Among his research one may find the neighboring farmstead Menjú (formerly: Abenhud) of Islamic Abarán (formerly: Favaran) that belonged to the hisn of Cieza (formerly: Cieza). The farmstead Abenhud was called to the insurgent Ibn Hud, who rebelled in 1228 against the Almohads, who agglomerated by his side in all the regions

³⁴⁶ MASSIGNON, Louis (1962) Ibn Sab'in et la "conspiration hallagienne" en Andalousie et en Orient au XIIIe siècle.. In: Études d'Orientalisme Lévi-Provençal II, pp. 661-681. In p. 637.

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of Al-Andalus and expelled the Almohads. So what followed thereafter comes from his study³⁴⁷.

On the one hand, one can say that the story began when Enrique Miguel Pérez Gil, and Arabist and good friend of López Moreno, observed the similarity between the names Ben Hud and Menjú. However, there was no further proof to confirm that Menjú was a derivative of Ben Hud, also called Abenhud. On the other hand, there was a study of Luis Lisón Hernández³⁴⁸. He was stating that in earlier times the inhabitants of Abarán called the ditch of Charrara, which was made in the XVIII century, the ditch of Benjú or Menjú instead.

Fortunately, Pedro Jiménez Castillo explained during a historical conference in Cieza that he had consulted documents that proved the existence of a place called Abenjud in the XV century. He suspected that the present area of Menjú is a derivative of Abenhud³⁴⁹. The document in question of Abenjud was of the year 1475.

It was thus necessary to confirm likeness between “El Menjú” and “Ben Hud”. One had to be sure that the Menju was a farmhouse in the Islamic period. Furthermore, one had to know where the fifteenth-century document that was quoted by Pedro Jiménez Castillo came from.

³⁴⁷ **LÓPEZ MORENO, Jesús Joaquín** (2003) Abenhud, otra alquería vecina al Abarán islámico. (Unpublished).

³⁴⁸ **LISÓN HERNÁNDEZ, Luis** (1986) Aportaciones para la historia del regadío en Abarán: 1.492-1.856. In: *Programa de Festejos de Abarán*, 1986.

³⁴⁹ **JIMÉNEZ CASTILLO, P.** (2002) Las fuentes arqueológicas árabes sobre el antiguo Reino de Murcia. *Tudmir 2001*. Conference on the 22nd January, 2002 in the building of C.A.M. at Cieza.

Miguel Rodríguez Llopis and Isabel García Díaz mention the Abenjud farmstead in an unpublished article³⁵⁰, which they discovered thanks to a 1475 document coming from the Cathedral of Murcia³⁵¹. However, the good die young and this was the case with *Miguel Rodríguez Llopis* (1958-2002). He was an eminent historian in Murcia for more than 20 years. Therefore, all hope was concentrated on Isabel García Díaz. She has a vast knowledge of the documents in the cathedral³⁵² of Murcia, which was proved by her book of 1989. Again López Moreno had good luck because his friend David Soto Carrasco was a student of Isabel García Díaz. In this way, he could obtain the report of his professor who shortly thereafter published the article³⁵³.

The document of 1475 states that the Andelma ditch, apparently of Roman origin, was reused by the Muslims. They rebuilt their path nearly parallel to the river on the right bank, from Los Almadenes to El Menjú ...

One can almost surely affirm the existence of a Muslim population in the last stretch of the canal. There one finds the contiguous names as: Algarce (the Argaz) Alfacen and

³⁵⁰ **RODRÍGUEZ LLOPIS, M. y GARCÍA DÍAZ, I.** (without date). "La villa de Cieza en la Baja Edad Media", *inedited*, 24 y 25. With thanks to David Soto Carrasco.

³⁵¹ Pleito entre la Orden de Santiago y la Iglesia de Cartagena sobre el reparto de los diezmos de Cieza. Año 1475. Archivo Catedral of Murcia (ACM), Leg. 217.

³⁵² **GARCÍA DÍAZ, Isabel** (1989) Documentos del Siglo XIV Archivo de la Catedral de Murcia. Colección de documentos para la historia del Reino de Murcia. Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, Volumen 13, Murcia.

³⁵³ **RODRÍGUEZ LLOPIS, Miguel y GARCÍA DÍAZ, Isabel** (2004) La villa de Cieza en la Baja Edad Media. In: Historia de Cieza, Vol. III.

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Abenjud (El Menju). Furthermore, in 1475, there were the last remains of a mill of the previous era. Crops, homes and buildings of transformation indicated at least one farmstead in the bottom of Andelma, around El Menjú.

Finally, our researcher López Morena³⁵⁴ could complete evolution of the name “Menjú”: Abenjud – Benjud – Benjú – Menjú.

During the course of the centuries, the historical memory was lost. The men who were passing Abenhud left innocently, his name derived in synonyms as Abenjud, Benjud, and the word Benjú or Menjú, which is the present name.

The unfortunate current name transformation from "B" to "M" has been prevented whenever we call such a beautiful place that we are not referring to the greatest political figure who has passed through our land. With this we finish the nice research of Jesús Joaquín López Moreno.

With regards to Siyasa (Cieza), it is necessary to clear up exactly to which villages were a part of the Ricote Valley in the years 711-1238, before the Christian occupation. According to historians in the past Cieza belonged to the territories of Ricote³⁵⁵.

³⁵⁴ We thank Jesús Joaquín López Moreno of Abarán for his many contributions to the research of Al-Darrax and Menjú.

³⁵⁵ **BAZZANA, André & MEULEMEESTER, Johnny de** (1998) Irrigation systems of Islamic origin in the Valle de Ricote (Murcia, Spain). In: *Ruralia II, Památky archeologické – Supplementum 11*, Praha, pp. 152-160. Cited on pp. 152-153.

NAVARRO PALAZÓN, J. y JIMÉNEZ CASTILLO, P. (1998) “Siyâsa”, *Materiales de Historia Local*, CPR de Cieza y Asociación Cultural “Fahs”, Cieza, pp. 99 y 100.

There are now Arabists who do not believe in the Ricote Valley as birthplace for Ibn Sab'in. This makes the matter of the birthplace and hypothesis of López Morena still more complicated³⁵⁶:

The precise nature of the relation between Ibn Sab'in and the Valle del Ricote is uncertain. The name might as well reflect an earlier connection of his family to the area. It seems, however, plausible that Ibn Sab'in was born somewhere in the greater area of Murcia. I would like to thank Alfonso Carmona for drawing my attention to this problem.

In this sense, it is necessary to refer to the study of Carmona González of the year 2007, when he stated that Ibn Al-Jatib wrote *Mursi raquti Al-asl* (Murcian of Ricote's origin). According to Carmona González, he must have been born, therefore, in the city of Murcia³⁵⁷.

Apparently there was some confusion in the past. Schreiner³⁵⁸ basing himself on the work of Ibn Al-Jatib (Loja-1313 – Fez, 1374)³⁵⁹, made a mistake with the nickname of Ibn Sab'in by using *Al-Quti* (Gothic) instead

³⁵⁶ **AKASOY, Anna Ayse** (2008) Ibn Sab'in's Sicilian Questions: the text, its sources, and their historical context. In: *Al-Qantara* XXIX, January-June, pp. 115-146. In p. 117.

AKASOY, Anna Ayse (2007b). Reading the prologue of Ibn Sab'in's Sicilian Questions. In: *Schede Medievali*, 45. Officina di Studi Medievali, Palermo, pp. 15-24.

³⁵⁷ **CARMONA GONZALEZ, Alfonso** (2007) De nuevo sobre Ibn Sab'in. In: 4º Congreso Internacional Valle de Ricote "Despeirta tus Sentidos". Centro cultural de Ricote del 8 a 11 de Noviembre de 2007. Edición: Consorcio Turístico Mancomunidad "Valle de Ricote", pp. 159-162. In p. 159.

³⁵⁸ **SCHREINER, Martin** (1898) "Beiträge zur Geschichte der theologischen Bewegungen im Islam", art. In: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig. 52, pp. 513-563.

³⁵⁹ **IBN AL-JATIB, Lisan Al-Din** (1977) *Al-Ihata fi Ajbari* Granada, First Edition of M. 'A. 'Inan, Al-Qahira, Vol. 4, p. 31.

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of the real sobriquet *Al-Riquti* (originating from the Ricote Valley)³⁶⁰. Al-Fasi³⁶¹ (775/1373 – 832/1428) used the nickname of Al-Riquti in his work. It was somewhat different is the case for Ibn Katir (1301-1373) of Damascus, who must have had much more information about Ibn Sab'in when the latest was some time living in this town. Ibn Katir³⁶² used the nickname of *Al-Riquti* in his *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, according to the latest research and work of Abdellah El Moussaoui Taib³⁶³. As one can observe these three historians are of the XIV century. In other words, they were not living in the time of Ibn Sab'in.

However, in the case that Ibn Khatir should not have known Ibn Sab'in, he undoubtedly could have obtained more information from other Sufis about Ibn Sab'in. In this respect, one cannot forget that Ibn Arabi of Murcia was in Damascus between the years 1223 and 1240. The founder of the Sab'iniyya movement in Damascus was Ibn Sab'in of the wadi Riqut. Badr Al-Din Hasan Ibn Hud (633-699 H/ 1236-1300 CE) came from Murcia and was the head of the Sufi sect of Sab'iniyya at Damascus in the second half of the thirteenth century. A follower of Ibn

³⁶⁰ **EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah** (2014) El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Tesis doctoral. Facultad de Filosofía. Departamento de Filosofía III (Hermenéutica y Filosofía de la Historia. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, p. 31.

³⁶¹ **MOHAMMAD IBN AHMAD AL-FASI** (1966) 'Iqd Al-tamin fi Tarij Al-balad Al-amin, Al-Qahira, Vol. 5, p. 335.

³⁶² **ISMA'IL IBN KATIR** (1947) *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*. Critical Edition of 'Abdellah Ibn 'Abdel Muhsin Al-Turki. Al-Qāhira, Dar Hayar, Vol. XVII, p. 497.

³⁶³ **EL MOUSSAOUI TAIB, Abdellah** (2014) El sufismo esotérico de Ibn Sabin, (s. VII-XIII d.C.). Tesis doctoral. Facultad de Filosofía. Departamento de Filosofía III (Hermenéutica y Filosofía de la Historia. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, p. 31.

Arabi, Afif Al-Din Sulayman Al-Tilimsani³⁶⁴ also became a follower of Sab'iniyya. Another follower of the Sab'iniyya movement was *shayk* Al-Kashani Al-Fargani.

Nasr states that the Sufis of the school of Ibn Arabi became interested in the teaching of Suhrawardi. Apparently one already knew in Spain of the teaching of Suhrawardi during the 13th century. Even Ibn Sab'in who lived at this time in the Maghrib refers to the *Talwihat* in his *Al-Risalat Al-faqiriyyah*. This fact is proof of the widespread acquaintance with Suhrawardi throughout the Islamic world at that time³⁶⁵.

³⁶⁴ **POUZET, Louis** (1975) Maghrébins a dames au VIIe / XIIIe siècle. In: Bulletin d'études orientales, V. 28, pp. 167-199. In p. 180.

³⁶⁵ **NASR, Seyyed Hossein** (1972) The spread of the Illuminationist School of Suhrawardi. In: Studies in Comparative Religion, Vol. 6, N° 3, pp. 2-14. In pp. 4 and 11.

12. The vanished Muslim city in Cieza, called Siyasa.

Siyasa is one of the best preserved eleventh to thirteenth century Islamic town settlements on the Spanish peninsula. The town itself is located 5 kilometers outside Cieza, high above the town on the Castle hill of Cieza. It was excavated during the 1980s under the direction of Julio Navarro Palazón. The result was the discovery of Cieza's past. Nineteen houses were excavated.

The Arabic sources to Siyasa are very scarce. At first, Abu 'Abd Allah b. Al-Hajj's reference confirms that Siyasa was known as a rural settlement (qarya) and thereafter as a fortified town (hisn). There are few written references about the ancient city of Siyasa (Cieza), but the name appears in several itineraries made, a kind of tourists' guide of those times so that travelers could follow.

Al-Udri (1003-1085) gives the following description of the early XI century about the road to follow between Cartagena and Toledo³⁶⁶: «The itinerary from Qartayana (Cartagena) to Tulaytula (Toledo). The first stage of the itinerary from Cartagena to Toledo is that one that goes from Cartagena to Murcia, about 30 miles away; up to Mulina 8 miles; up to Siyasa 25 miles ...»

The Muslim cartographer Muhammed Al-Idrisi (1099-1161), twice listed the castle of Siyasa on his journeys between Murcia

³⁶⁶ **Al-UDRI** (1965) Tarsi 'Al-ajbar, de. 'Abd Al-'Aziz Al-Ahwani, Madrid, IEEI; trad. parcial, E. Molina López, "La cora de Tudmir según Al-'Udri", Cuadernos de Historia del Islam, 4 (1972), pp. 51 and 52.

and Segura, and Murcia to Cuenca. According to him, Siyasa was a hisn, or fortified town, with an alcaba of its own³⁶⁷.



Monument of Al-Idrisi at Ceuta
Courtesy of Ecemami (CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Tabula Rogeriana was drawn by Al-Idrisi in 1154 for the Norman King Roger II of Sicily, after a stay of eighteen years at his court, where he worked on the commentaries and illustrations of the map. The map, with legends written in Arabic, while showing the Eurasian continent in its entirety, only shows the northern part of the African continent and lacks details in the Horn of

³⁶⁷ **AL-IDRISI** (1989) Los caminos de Al-Andalus en el siglo XII según “Uns Al-Muhay Wa-rawd Al-Furay” (Solaz de corazones y prados de contemplación). Estudio, edición, traducción y anotaciones por Jassim Abid Mizal. Consejo superior de Investigaciones científicas. Instituto de Filología. Madrid, pp. 276 and 292.

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Africa and Southeast Asia. For King Roger it was inscribed on a massive disc of solid silver, two meters in diameter.



The Tabula Rogeriana, drawn by Al-Idrisi for Roger II of Sicily in 1154, one of the most advanced ancient world maps. Modern consolidation, created from the 70 double-page spreads of the original atlas.

Julio Navarro Palazón states that the fatwa of *Abu Abd Allah b. Al-Hajj* (first quarter of the 12th c.) refers to Siyasa. He is probably referring to the Cordovan mufti Ibn Al-Hajj (458/1066-529/1134) who was known for his fatwas³⁶⁸ preserved³⁶⁹ in *Madhahib Al-hukkam*. There is a collection of fatwas issued by Ibn Al-Hajj that has not been edited yet³⁷⁰. It is interesting to see that Butshish³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ **HALLAQ, Wael b.** (1997) *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunni Usul Al-fiqh*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 157.

³⁶⁹ **BURESI, Pascal** (2004) *La frontière entre chrétienté et Islam dans la péninsule Ibérique: du Tage à la Sierra Morena (fin Xe-milieu XIIIe siècle)*. Publibook, Paris, p. 306.

³⁷⁰ **VIGUERA, M.J.** (1993) *En torno a las fuentes jurídicas de Al-Andalus*. In: *Actes du Congrès sur la civilisation d'Al-Andalus dans le temp et dans l'espace*. Al-Muhammadiya, Université Hassan II, pp. 71-78.

³⁷¹ **BUTSHISH, I. Al-Q.** (1993) *Al-Maghrib wa'l-Andalus fi'asr Al-muräbitin*. Beirut.

used Ibn Al-Hajj's fatwas as a source for the history of the Almoravid period. Going back to the book of Navarro Palazon³⁷², he, furthermore, states that «Abu 'Abd Allah b. Al-Hajj's reference confirms that, even at the beginning of the 12th century, Siyasa was a *qarya*.»

In the farmstead (garyat) of Siyasa next (ala) our road to
Murcia

M'hammad Benabud³⁷³ informs us that the work *Nawazil* of Ibn Al-Hajj has been studied and edited (not published) by Prof. Ahmed El Yousfi of the University of Abdelmalek Essaadi of Tetuan.

La Crónica General³⁷⁴, referring to the year 1243, indicates that the villages Crevillente, Alicante, Elche, Orihuela, Alhama, Aledo, Ricote and Cieza had self-government (sennoreados sobre sí).

³⁷² **NAVARRO PALAZON, Julio & JIMÉNEZ CASTILLO, Pedro** (2007) *Siyasa: estudio arqueológico del despoblado andalusí* (ss. XI-XIII). Escuela de Estudios Árabes de Granada (CSIC), pp. 30 and 343. They refer to an inedited manuscript of the *nawazil* of Ibn Al-Hajj of the General Library at Rabat.

³⁷³ **BENABUD, M'hammad** (2013) *El pensamiento andalusí y sus fuentes durante el siglo XI*. In: *Minervae Baeticae*. Boletín de la Real Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras, 2ª época, 41, pp. 185-232. In p. 228.

³⁷⁴ **MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, Ramón** (1906) *Primera Crónica General*. *Estoria de España que mandó componer Alfonso el Sabio y se continuaba bajo Sancho IV en 1289*. Bailly-Baillière é Hijos, Editores, Madrid, p. 742.

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Siyasa (Cieza)
Courtesy of: www.cieza.es

The inhabitants of Siyasa built a separate cemetery area that is located on a hill close to the principal entrance to the village. Later on, the cemetery was enclosed in its walled area due to the growth of the town.

The oldest news of the cemetery one can find is in an article that describes the old town³⁷⁵. Two centuries later, Fray Pascual Salmerón³⁷⁶ mentioned the cemetery. In the XX century Ramón María Capdevila³⁷⁷ affirms that he drew forty graves.

³⁷⁵ **MARÍN Y MENA, Alonso** (1579) Descripción y relación de la villa de Cieza hecha por orden de Felipe II por el bachiller Alonso Marín y Mena y dos viejos de esta villa el 25 de marzo de 1579. In: Real Biblioteca de El Escorial, manuscrito “Relaciones de los pueblos de España”, vol. V, folios 634-639, N° 29.

³⁷⁶ **SALMERÓN, F. Pascual** (1777) La antigua Cateia, o Carcesa, hoy Cieza, Villa del Reyno de Murcia, ilustrada con un resumen historial, y más disertaciones sobre algunas de sus antigüedades, Madrid, p. 21.

³⁷⁷ **CAPDEVILA, Ramón María** (1928) Historia de la Muy Noble y Muy leal Villa, hoy Excelentísima ciudad de Cieza..., Vol. II, Murcia, pp. 122-123.



The Castle of Cieza

The secular interest which has raised the cemetery in the nearby town of Cieza makes it understandable that it is one of the most plundered places.

The city of Medina Siyâsa is the most important archaeological site with regards to Islamic decoration in Europe. Medina Siyasa is a Muslim settlement of the eleventh century, located on the Castle Hill of the city of Cieza. Siyâsa was the foremost Islamic settlement of Vega Alta of the Segura River, in the kingdom of Murcia. The first settlers arrived during the era of the Caliphates, which lasted from 929 to 1031.

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**Alquerque-12 on a stone in the old Musulman town Syasa Photo:
Photo: Courtesy of © Juan Buitrago**

The Medina is enclosed within a walled ring of protection covering an area of 11 hectares. This urban settlement consisted of at least 750 households, with a population of approximately 4,000 inhabitants. The streets of Medina Siyasa were irregular and narrow, without any urban planning (according to today's standards). The occupation of this area was broken by the arrival of the Christian forces of Castile in 1243.

The houses had two levels, the upper being for the bedrooms and a room for the women to be out of sight when strangers called. The lower level was for the kitchen, where food was prepared, and winter and summer lounges. The epicenter of the house was the central courtyard or patio, giving daylight to the house. There was also a small stable area somewhere near the entrance, because beasts were necessary for the supply of goods.



House #6 of Museum Siyasa

The city of Siyâsa (Cieza, in the province of Murcia, Spain) was completely depopulated, for unknown reasons, during the second half of 13th century, several decades after the Christian conquest of the former qûra of Tudmir. Excavations carried out in the madîna exposed several rather well preserved habitation areas. The excavations revealed the spatial organization of the house, as well as the elements of rich architectural decoration.

House #6 is a good example of the architecture of the city. In its period of maximum splendor in the mid-twelfth century and early thirteenth centuries, the town grew to more than 4,000 inhabitants. Archaeological work in Siyâsa began in 1981. The museum of Siyasa opened its doors in 1992, hosting all archaeological finds found in the town of Cieza (Murcia) since 1981.

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The drawing of Alquerque-12 on a stone in the old Muslim town Siyasa

Looking always for the Alquerque-12 drawing during my excursions in ancient Muslim regions, in 2001 I paid a visit to the Siyasa Museum at Cieza. The director, at that time, Mr. Joaquín Salmeron Juan, showed me different stones:



Joaquín Salmerón Juan
Courtesy of: (c) www.enciezadigital.com³⁷⁸

In the showcase two stones draw my attention. One plaster stone had the appearance of Alquerque-12 and another one

³⁷⁸ <http://www.enciezadigital.com/detallenoticia.asp?Idnoticia=3211>

of Alquerque-3. The quality of the two drawings is in a bad state.



Alquerque-12 on a plaster stone at Syasa (Cieza)
Photo: Courtesy of © José Antonio Hellín Martínez

The village of Siyasa was abandoned by its inhabitants before 1273, so the stone could be before that period. With this discovery, one can say that this is one of the oldest references to the Alquerque-12 stones in Spain. The plaster stone of the Alquerque-12 is 30,9 cm long and 30,6 cm in width. The thickness of the stone is 10,5 cm. The date is stipulated on the last third period of the XIII century.

This plaster stone of the Alquerque-12, found on the wall, is 20,9 cm long and 21,0 cm in width. According to my knowledge, the two plaster stones in the Museum of Cieza corresponding to the ancient Muslim town Siyasa are nothing more than two drawings of the Alquerque-12

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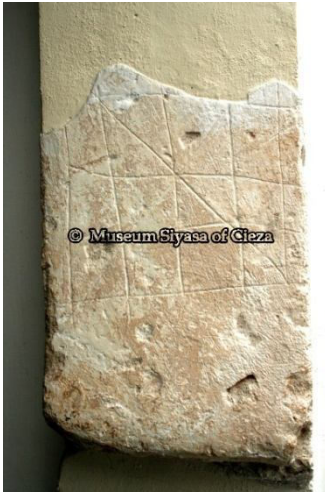
game. One drawing is complete, and the other one cannot be shown entirely, as the stone is broken³⁷⁹.



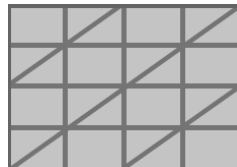
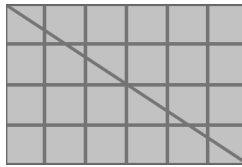
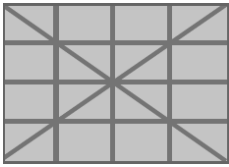
Alquerque-12, (partially) on a plaster stone at Syasa (Cieza)
Photo: Courtesy of © José Antonio Hellín Martínez

³⁷⁹ The best information you will find in:

SALMERÓN JUAN, Joaquín (2011) El origen de los juegos en Cieza desde la Prehistoria hasta el siglo XIII. En: Revista C.E.H. Fray Pasqual Salmerón, pp. 32-37.



This board is a part of a horseshoe arch (late XII century until about 1266) House # 6 of Siyâsa.
Photo: Courtesy of (c) Museum Siyase of Cieza



We hereto reflect three similar boards found in Tenerife island³⁸⁰, but this board of Siyasa is not the same. Apparently it is missing one diagonal. The board with two diagonals corresponds to a game that was known in Mexico as the Coyote & Chickens³⁸¹.

³⁸⁰ **WESTERVELD, Govert** (2013) The History of Alquerque-12. Spain and France. (It all started in Siyasa, near to the Valle de Ricote). Volume I. Academia de Estudios Humanísticos de Blanca, pp. 169-171. (Volume II and III pending).

³⁸¹ **PARLETT, David** (1999) The Oxford History of Board Games, Oxford University Press, p. 187.

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